

LAHIRI'S SELECT POEMS

REVISED EDITION

Reprint

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PREFACE

“ Lahiri's Select Poems ” was originally compiled by three head masters in collaboration. Prompted by the wish to keep alive the memory of his parents, the late Mr S K Lahiri made a gift of the copyright of the book to the University, on condition that the sale proceeds of the book should be utilized to create a fund out of which two gold medals to be called “ Lahiri Medals ” might be awarded annually to the two candidates standing highest in the B.A. Examination, in the subject of Mental and Moral Philosophy. Subsequently, in 1914, the Syndicate, at the suggestion of the donor and with the sanction of the Senate, founded a research fellowship in the history of Bengali language and literature, to be maintained out of the income of the above-mentioned fund, supplemented by grants from the fee fund of the University, and have named the fellowship after the late Babu Ramtanu Lahiri, the father of the donor.

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* By kind permission of Sir Henry Newbolt.

LAHIRI'S SELECT POEMS

1

THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE

TOLL for the brave!
The brave that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore.

Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset;
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave!
Brave Kempenfelt is gone;
His last sea-fight is fought,
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle;
No tempest gave the shock;
She sprang no fatal leak;
She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath ;
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,
Once dreaded by our foes !
And mingle with your cup
The tear that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound
And she may float again,
Full charged with England's thunder,
And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er ;
And he and his eight hundred
Must plough the wave no more.

2

THE INCHCAPE ROCK

No stir in the air, no stir in the sea,
The ship was still as she could be,
Her sails from heaven received no motion,
Her keel was steady in the ocean.

Without either sign or sound of their shock
The waves flow'd over the Inchcape Rock;
So little they rose, so little they fell,
They did not move the Inchcape Bell.

The Abbot of Aberbrothok
Had placed that bell on the Inchcape Rock;
On a buoy in the storm it floated and swung,
And over the waves its warning rung.

When the Rock was hid by the surge's swell,
The mariners heard the warning bell;
And then they knew the perilous Rock,
And blest the Abbot of Aberbrothok.

The Sun in heaven was shining gay,
All things were joyful on that day;
The sea-birds scream'd as they wheel'd round,
And there was joyaunce in their sound.

The buoy of the Inchcape Bell was seen
A darker speck on the ocean green ;
Sir Ralph the Rover walk'd his deck,
And he fixed his eye on the darker speck.

He felt the cheering power of spring,
It made him whistle, it made him sing ;
His heart was mirthful to excess,
But the Rover's mirth was wickedness.

His eye was on the Inchcape float ;
Quoth he, ' My men, put out the boat,
And row me to the Inchcape Rock,
And I'll plague the Abbot of Aberbrothok.'

The boat is lower'd, the boatmen row,
And to the Inchcape Rock they go ;
Sir Ralph bent over from the boat,
And he cut the Bell from the Inchcape float

Down sunk the Bell with a gurgling sound,
The bubbles rose and burst around ;
Quoth Sir Ralph, ' The next who comes to the Rock
Won't bless the Abbot of Aberbrothok.'

Sir Ralph the Rover sail'd away,
He scour'd the seas for many a day ;

And now grown rich with plunder'd store,
He steers his course for Scotland's shore.

So thick a haze o'erspreads the sky
They cannot see the Sun on high;
The wind hath blown a gale all day,
At evening it hath died away.

On the deck the Rover takes his stand,
So dark it is they see no land.
Quoth Sir Ralph, ' It will be lighter soon,
For there is the dawn of the rising Moon.'

' Canst hear,' said one, ' the breakers roar?
For methinks we should be near the shore.'
' Now where we are I cannot tell,
But I wish I could hear the Inchcape Bell '

They hear no sound, the swell is strong;
Though the wind hath fallen they drift along,
Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock,—
' Oh Christ! it is the Inchcape Rock!'

Sir Ralph the Rover tore his hair;
He curst himself in his despair;
The waves rush in on every side,
The ship is sinking beneath the tide.

But even in his dying fear
One dreadful sound could the Rover hear,
A sound as if with the Inchcape Bell,
The Devil below was ringing his knell.

3

A FIELD FLOWER

On Finding one in full Bloom, on Christmas day, 1804

THERE is a flower, a little flower,
With silver crest and golden eye,
That welcomes every changing hour,
And weathers every sky.

The prouder beauties of the field
In gay but quick succession shine,
Race after race their honours yield,
They flourish and decline

But this small flower, to Nature dear,
While moons and stars their courses run,
Wreathes the whole circle of the year,
Companion of the sun.

It smiles upon the lap of May,
To sultry August spreads its charms,
Lights pale October on his way,
And twines December's arms.

The purple heath and golden broom,
On moory mountains catch the gale,
O'er lawns the lily sheds perfume,
The violet in the vale

But this bold floweret climbs the hill,
Hides in the forest, haunts the glen,
Plays on the margin of the rill,
Peeps round the fox's den

Within the garden's cultured round
It shares the sweet carnation's bed,
And blooms on consecrated ground
In honour of the dead.

The lambkin crops its crimson gem,
The wild-bee murmurs on its breast,
The blue-fly bends its pensile stem,
Light o'er the sky-lark's nest

'Tis Flora's page;—in every place,
In every season fresh and fair,
It opens with perennial grace,
And blossoms everywhere.

On waste and woodland, rock and plain;
Its humble buds unheeded rise;
The rose has but a summer-reign,
The daisy never`dies.

4

ON THE DEITY

FROM FERDUSI

ALL hail to his almighty name
Who life on man bestow'd,
And as a guide bade Reason's flame
Illume his darken'd road!

Thou, Lord of life!—thou, Lord of space!
From whom all light doth flow;
Thou, who has deign'd from wond'rous grace
Salvation's path to show.

Creator of the planets bright;
Lord of the arch divine;
From thy effulgence borrowing light
Sun, moon, and stars, do shine.

Thy name, thy shape, and thy abode,
To man are all unknown;
Betwixt frail beings and their God
A sacred veil is thrown.

For He, who to the human^d eye
A circle wide has given,
In wisdom did it power deny
To see the ways of Heaven.

To where He sits with glory crown'd
Not thought itself can stray ;
Far, far beyond all earthly bound
Dwells He whom all obey.

Wouldst thou with potent Reason's aid
Pierce through the great design?
Say, can the wretch his breath has made,
His Maker's power define?

Weak, erring man! thy duty here
Is gratitude to shew ;
The Eternal's wisdom to revere,
Nor further seek to know.

THE HARE AND MANY FRIENDS

FRIENDSHIP, like love, is but a name,
Unless to one you stint the flame.
'Tis thus in Friendships ; who depend
On many, rarely find a friend.

A hare who, in a civil way,
Complied, with every thing, like Gay,
Was known by all the bestial train
Who haunt the wood, or graze the plain;
Her care was never to offend;
And every creature was her friend.

As forth she went at early dawn,
To taste the dew-besprinkled lawn,
Behind she hears the hunter's cries,
And from the deep-mouthed thunder flies.
She starts, she stops, she pants for breath;
She hears the near advance of death;
She doubles to mislead the hound,
And measures back her mazy round;
Till, fainting in the public way,
Half dead with fear she gasping lay

What transport in her bosom grew,
When first the horse appeared in view!

"Let me," says she, "your back ascend,
And owe my safety to a friend
You know my feet betray my flight;
To friendship every burden's light."

The horse replied, "Poor honest puss,
It grieves my heart to see thee thus:
Be comforted, relief is near,
For all your friends are in the rear."

She next the stately bull implor'd;
And thus replied the mighty lord;
"Since every beast alive can tell
That I sincerely wish you well,

I may without offence, pretend
To take the freedom of a friend.
Love calls me hence; a favourite cow
Expects me near yon barley-mow;
And, when a lady's in the case,
You know, all other things give place.
To leave you thus might seem unkind;
But see, the goat is just behind."

The goat remarked her pulse was high
Her languid head, her heavy eye:
" My back," says he, " may do you harm;
The sheep's at hand, and wool is warm."

The sheep was feeble, and complained
His sides a load of wool sustained;
Said he was slow, confessed his fears;
For hounds eat sheep as well as hares.

She now the trotting calf addressed,
To save from death a friend distressed.

" Shall I," says he, " of tender age,
In this important care engage?
Older and abler pass'd you by;
How strong are those! how weak am I!
Should I presume to bear you hence,
Those friends of mine may take offence.
Excuse me, then; you know my heart;
But dearest friends, alas! must part,
How shall we all lament! Adieu;
For see the hounds are just in view."

6

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

BETWEEN the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower
Comes a pause in the day's occupations
That is known as the Children's Hour

I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,
Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra;
And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence;
Yet I know by their merry eyes
They are plotting and planning together
To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,
A sudden raid from the hall!
By three doors left unguarded
They enter my castle wall.

They climb up into my turret
O'er the arms and back of my chair:
If I try to escape they surround me;
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me 'with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old ~~moustache~~ as I am
Is not a match for you all!

I have you fast in my fortress,
And will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeon
In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you for ever,
Yes, for ever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
And moulder in dust away!

7

THE QUIET LIFE

HAPPY the man, whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.

LAHIRI'S SELECT POEMS

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire;
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire.

Blest, who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away
In health of body, peace of mind.
Quiet by day,

Sound sleep by night; study and ease
Together mix'd; sweet recreation,
And innocence, which most does please
With meditation

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown;
Thus unlamented let me die;
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie

PATRIOTISM

~~BREATHES~~ there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
"This is my own, my native land!"
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
From wandering on a foreign strand?

If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no Minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentrated all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung

9

THE SCHOLAR

My days among the Dead are past;
Around me I behold,
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
The mighty minds of old:
My never-failing friends are they
With whom I converse day by day

With them I take delight in weal,
And seek relief in woe;
And while I understand and feel
How much to them I owe,
My cheeks have often been bedew'd
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the Dead ; with them
I live in long past years,
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,
Partake their hopes and fears,
And from their lessons seek and find
Instruction with an humble mind

My hopes are with the Dead ; anon
My place with them will be,
And I with them shall travel on
Through all Futurity ;
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
That will not perish in the dust.

TO DAFFODILS

FAIR Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon
As yet the early rising Sun
Has not attain'd his noon

Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song ;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a Spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay
As you, or anything.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the Summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew
Ne'er to be found again.

11

THE ECHOING GREEN

THE Sun does arise,
And make happy the skies;
The merry bells ring
To welcome the Spring;
The skylark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around
To the bells' cheerful sound,
While our sports shall be seen
On the Echoing Green.

Old John, with white hair,
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak,
Among the old folk.

They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say:
'Such, such were the joys
When we all, girls and boys,
In our youth time were seen
On the Echoing Green.'

Till the little ones, weary,
No more can be merry;
The sun does descend,
And our sports have an end.
Round the laps of their mothers
Many sisters and brothers,
Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest,
And sport no more seen
On the darkening Green

THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corpse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

'We buried him darkly, at dead of night,
The sods with our bayonets turning;
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Not in sheet nor in shroud we wound him;
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,
With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow;
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought, as we hollowed his narrow bed,
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
'That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head
And we far away on the billow!

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him,—
But little he'll reck, if they let him sleep on
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done,
When the clock struck the hour for retiring;
And we heard the distant and random gun
That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
 From the field of his fame fresh and gory;
 We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone--
 But we left him alone with his glory.

 13

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

JOHN Gilpin was a citizen
 Of credit and renown, \^
 A train-band Captain eke was he
 Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear: ^
 " Though wedded we have been
 These twice ten tedious years, yet we ^
 No holiday have seen.

" To-morrow is our wedding day,
 And we will then repair ^
 Unto the Bell at Edmonton,
 All in a chaise and pair

" My sister and my sister's child,
 Myself and children three
 Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
 On horseback after we."

He soon replied, " I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,)
Therefore it shall be done."

" I am a linen-draper bold, "
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend, the calender,
Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mrs Gilpin, " That's well said:
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnish'd with our own,
Which is both bright and clear."

John Gilpin kiss'd his loving wife,
O'erjoy'd was he to find
That, though in pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allow'd
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd
Where they did all get in,
Six precious souls, and all agog &
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
 Were never folk so glad,
 The stones did rattle underneath
 As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
 Seized fast the flowing mane,
 And up he got in haste to ride,
 But soon came down again,

For saddle-tree scarce reach'd had he,
 His journey 'to begin,
 When, turning round his head, he saw
 Three customers come in

So down he came; for loss of time
 Although it grieved him sore,
 { Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
 Would trouble him much more }

'Twas long before the customers
 Were suited to their mind,
 When Betty screaming came down stairs,
 "The wine is left behind!"

"Good lack!" quoth he, "yet bring it me,
 My leathern belt likewise,
 In which I bear my trusty sword
 When I do exercise "

Now Mistress Gilpin, (careful soul!)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true

Then over all, that he might be
Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brush'd and neat,
He manfully did throw

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly ^{pac}ing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed!

But finding soon a smother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which gall'd him in his seat.

So, 'Fair and softly,' John he cried,
But John he cried in vain:
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasp'd the mane with both his hands
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

— Away went Gilpin, neck or nought,
Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung,
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
Up flew the windows all,
And every soul cried out, " Well done ! "
As loud as he could bawl,

Away went Gilpin—who but he? ^{and}
His fame soon spread around;
“ He carries weight, he rides a race!
‘Tis for a thousand pound! ”

And still, as fast as he drew near,
‘Twas wonderful to view,
How in a trice the turnpike-men
Their gates wide open threw:

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shatter’d at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse’s flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seemed to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced;
For all might see the bottle-necks
Still dangling at his waist

Thus all through merry Islington,
These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay.

And there he thrēw the Wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton, his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wond'ring much
To see how he did ride.

" Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house! "
They all at once did cry;
" The dinner waits, and we are tired: "
Said Gilpin—" So am I! ")

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there,
For why? his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew
Shot by an archer strong,
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calender's
His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:—

“What news? what news? your tidings tell,
Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bareheaded you are come,
Or why you come at all?”

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke;
And thus unto the calender
In merry guise he spoke:—

“I came because your horse would come;
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,
They are upon the road”

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Return'd him not a single word,
But to the house went in.

Whence straight he came with hat and wig,
A wig that flow'd behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind,

He held them up and in his turn
Thus show'd his ready wit
"My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit

" But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case."

Said John " It is my wedding-day
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware "

So, turning to his horse, he said,
" I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine

Ah, luckless speech, and bootless boast,
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And gallop'd off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig;
He lost them sooner than at first,
For why?—they were too big.

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pull'd out half a crown:

And thus unto the youth she said,
That drove them to the Bell,
"This shall be yours, when you bring back
My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back again,
Whom in a trice he tried to stop
By catching at his rein;

But not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frightened steed he frightened more,
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went post-boy at his heels,
The post-boy's horse right glad to miss
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With post-boy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry:—

“(Stop thief! stop thief!—a highwayman!”
Not one of them was mute,
And all and each that pass’d that way
Did join in the pursuit .

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking, as before,
That Gilpin, rode a race

(And so he did, and won it too
For he got first to town;
Nor stopp’d till where he first got up
He did again get down

Now let us sing, Long live the king,
And Gilpin, long live he!
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see!

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND

Ye Mariners of England
That guard our native seas!
Whose flag has braved, a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze—
Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe:
And sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow;
While the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy winds do blow.

The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave—
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And Ocean was their grave:
Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell,
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow;
While the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy winds do blow.

Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is o'er the mountain wave,
Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak
She quells the floods below,

As they roar on the shore,
When the stormy winds do blow;
When the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy winds do blow.

The meteor-flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn;
Till danger's troubled night depart,
And the star of peace return
Then, then ye ocean-warriors!
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
When the storm has ceased to blow;
When the fiery fight is heard no more.
And the storm has ceased to blow.

15

EPITAPH ON A HARE

HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,
Nor swifter greyhound follow,
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo;

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,
Who, nursed with tender care,
And to domestic bounds confined,
Was still a wild Jack hare.

Though duly from my ha2d he took
 His pittance every night,
 He did it with a jealous look,
 And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,
 And milk, and oats, and straw;
 Thistles, or lettuces instead,
 With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,
 On pippins' russet peel,
 And, when his juicy salads failed,
 Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,
 Whereon he loved to bound,
 To skip and gambol like a fawn,
 And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,
 For then he lost his fear,
 But most before approaching showers,
 Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round-rolling moons
 He thus saw steal away,
 Dozing out all his idle noons,
 And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,
For he would oft beguile
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
And force me to smile.

But now beneath his walnut shade,
He finds his long last home,
And waits, in snug concealment laid,
Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more aged, feels the shock
From which no care can save,
And, partner once of Tiny's box,
Must soon partake his grave.

16

TO BLOSSOMS

FAIR pledges of a fruitful tree,
Why do ye fall so fast?
Your date is not so past,
But you may stay yet here awhile,
To blush and gently smile,
And go at last.

What! were ye born to be
An hour or half's delight,
And so to bid good-night?
Twas pity Nature brought you forth
Merely to show your worth,
And lose you quite.

THE SOLDIER'S DREAM

25

But you are lovely leaves, where we
May read how soon things have
Their end, though ne'er so brave:
And after they have shown their pride
Like you awhile, they glide
Into the grave.

17

THE SOLDIER'S DREAM

'Our bugles sang truce, for the night-cloud had
lowered.
And the sentinel stars set their watch in the sky;
And thousands had sunk on the ground overpowered,
The weary to sleep, and the wounded to die.

When reposing that night on my pallet of straw
By the wolf-scaring faggot that guarded the slain,
At the dead of the night a sweet Vision I saw
And thrice ere the morning I dreamt it again.

Methought from the battle-field's dreadful array
Far, far, I had roamed on a desolate track:
'Twas Autumn,—and sunshine arose on the way
To the home of my fathers, that welcomed me back.

I flew to the pleasant fields, traversed so oft.
In life's morning march, when my bosom was young
heard my own mountain-goats bleating aloft,
And knew the sweet strain that the corn-reapers
sung.

Then pledged we the wine-cup, and fondly I swore
From my home and my weeping friends never to
part,
My little ones kissed me a thousand times o'er
And my wife sobbed aloud in her fulness of heart.

Stay—stay with us!—rest!—thou art weary and
worn!—

And fain was their war-broken soldier to stay;—
But sorrow returned with the dawning of morn,
And the voice in my dreaming ear melted away.

18

BISHOP HATTO

THE summer and autumn had been so wet
That in winter the corn was growing yet;
'T was a piteous sight to see all around
The corn lie rotting on the ground.

Every day the starving poor
They crowded around Bishop Hatto's door.
For he had a plentiful last year's store,
And all the neighbourhood could tell
His granaries were furnished well.

At last, Bishop Hatto appointed a day
To quiet the poor without delay;
He bade them to his great barn repair,
And they should have food for the winter there.

Rejoiced such tidings good to hear,
The poor folk flocked from far and near;
The great barn was full as it could hold
Of women and children, young and old.

But when he saw it could hold no more,
Bishop Hatto he made fast the door;
And whilst for mercy on Christ they call,
He set fire to the barn, and burnt them all.

"I' faith, 't is an excellent bonfire!" quoth he,
"And the country is greatly obliged to me
For ridding it in these times forlorn
Of rats that only consume the corn."

So then to his palace returnèd he,
And he sat down to supper merrily,
And he slept that night like an innocent man,
But Bishop Hatto never slept again.

In the morning as he entered the hall,
Where his picture hung against the wall,
A sweat like death all over him came,
For the rats had eaten it out of the frame.

As he looked, there came a man from his farm
He had a countenance white with alarm;
"My lord, I opened your granaries this morn,
And the rats had eaten all your corn."

Another came running presently,
And he was pale as pale could be,
"Fly, my Lord Bishop, fly!" quoth he,
"Ten thousand rats are coming this way,—
The Lord forgive you for yesterday!"

"I'll go to my tower in the Rhine," replied he
" 'T is the safest place in Germany;
The walls are high, the shores are steep,
And the tide is strong, and the waters deep."

Bishop Hatto fearfully hastened away,
And he crossed the Rhine without delay,
And reached his tower in the island, and barred
All the gates secure and hard.

He laid him down and closed his eyes,—
But soon a scream made him arise;
He started, and saw two eyes of flame
On his pillow from whence the screaming came..

He listened and looked;—it was only the cat;
But the Bishop he grew more fearful for that,
For she sat screaming, mad with fear,
At the army of rats that were drawing near.

For they have swum over the river so deep,
And they have climbed the shores so steep,
And now by thousands up they crawl
To the holes and the windows in the wall.

Down on his knees the Bishop fell,
And faster and faster his beads did he tell,
As louder and louder, drawing near,
The saw of their teeth without he could hear.

And in at the windows, and in at the door,
And through the walls by thousands they pour,
And down from the ceiling, and up through the floor,
From the right and the left, from behind and before,
From within and without, from above and below,
And all at once to the Bishop they go.

They have whetted their teeth against the stones,
And now they pick the Bishop's bones;
They gnawed the flesh from every limb,
For they were sent to do judgment on him!

19

THE MISER AND PLUTUS

THE wind was high, the window shakes;
With sudden start the Miser wakes;
Along the silent room he stalks;
Looks back, and trembles as he walks!
Each lock and ev'ry bolt he tries,
In ev'ry creek and corner pries,
Then opes the chest with treasure stored,
And stands in rapture o'er his hoard;
But now, with sudden qualms possess'd,
He wrings his hands, he beats his breast.
By conscience stung, he wildly stares,
And thus his guilty soul declares.

Had the deep earth her stores confined,
This heart had known sweet peace of mind.
But virtue's sold. Good gods! what price
Can recompense the pangs of vice!
O bane of good! seducing cheat!
Can man, weak man, thy power defeat?
Gold banish'd honour from the mind
And only left the name behind;
Gold sow'd the world with ev'ry ill;
Gold taught the murd'rer's sword to kill:
'Twas gold instructed coward hearts,
In treachery's more pernicious arts.
Who can recount the mischiefs o'er?
Virtue resides on earth no more!

He spoke, and sigh'd. In angry mood,
Plutus, his god, before him stood.

The Miser trembling, lock'd his chest;
The Vision frown'd, and thus addrest:
 Whence is this vile ungrateful rant?
Each sordid rascal's daily cant.
Did I, base wretch, corrupt mankind?
The fault's in thy rapacious mind.
Because my blessings are abused,
Must I be censured, cursed, accused?
Ev'n virtue's self by knaves is made
A cloak to carry on the trade;
And power (when lodged in their possession
Grows tyranny, and rank oppression.
Thus, when the villain crams his chest,
Gold is the canker of the breast;
'Tis avarice, insolence, and pride,
And every shocking vice beside.
But when to virtuous hands 'tis given,
It blesses, like the dews of heav'n.
Like heav'n, it hears the orphans' cries,
And wipes the tears from widows' eyes;
Their crimes on gold shall misers lay,
Who pawn'd their sordid souls for pay?
Let bra^{vo}es then (when blood is spilt
Upbraid the passive sword with guilt.

20

THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS

Ort in the stilly night
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond Memory brings the light
Of other days around me :
The smiles, the tears
Of boyhood's years,
The words of love then spoken;
The eyes that shone,
Now dimm'd and gone,
The cheerful hearts now broken
Thus in the stilly night
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.
When I remember all
The friends so link'd together
I've seen around me fall
Like leaves in wintry weather,
I feel like one
Who treads alone
Some banquet-hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled
Whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed !
Thus in the stilly night
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me

THE HAPPY LIFE

How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill!

Whose passions not his masters are,
Whose soul is still prepared for death,
Not tied unto the world with care
Of public fame or private breath;

Who hath his life from rumours freed;
Whose conscience is his strong retreat
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruin make accusers great;

Who God doth late and early pray,
More of his grace than gifts to lend:
And entertains the harmless day
With a well-chosen book or friends;

—This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall;
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And, having nothing, yet hath all.

22

ENGLAND'S DEAD

Son of the ocean isle!
Where sleep your mighty dead?
Show me what high and stately pile
Is reared o'er Glory's bed.

Go, stranger! track the deep,
Free, free, the white sail spread!
Wave may not foam, nor wild wind sweep,
Where rest not England's dead.

On Egypt's burning plains,
By the pyramid o'erswayed,
With fearful power the noon-day reigns,
And the palm-trees yield no shade

But let the angry sun
From heaven look fiercely red,
Unfelt by those whose task is done!
There slumber England's dead.

The hurricane hath might
Along the Indian shore,
And far, by Ganges' banks at night,
Is heard the tiger's roar.

But let the sound roll on!
It hath no tone of dread
For those that from their toils are gone;
—There slumber England's dead.

Loud rush the torrent-floods
The western wilds among,
And free, in green Columbia's woods,
The hunter's bow is strung.

But let the floods rush on!
Let the arrow's flight be sped!
Why should they reck whose task is done?
There slumber England's dead!

The mountain-storms rise high
In the snowy Pyrenees,
And toss the pine boughs through the sky,
Like rose-leaves on the breeze.

But let the storm rage on!
Let the forest-wreaths be shed!
For the Roncesvalles' field is won,
There slumber England's dead!

On the frozen deep's repose
'Tis a dark and dreadful hour,
When round the ship the ice-fields close,
To chain her with their power.

But let the ice drift on!
Let the cold-blue desert spread!
Their course with mast and flag is done,
There slumber England's dead!

The warlike of the isles,
The men of field and wave,
Are not the rocks their funeral piles.
The seas and shores their grave?

23

THE WRECK OF THE HESPERUS

It was the schooner Hesperus,
That sailed the wintry sea;
And the skipper had taken his little daughter,
To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax,
Her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds,
That ope in the month of May.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,
His pipe was in his mouth,
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow
The smoke now West, now South.

Then up and spake an old Sailor,
Had sailed to the Spanish Main,
"I pray thee, put into yonder port,
For I fear a hurricane.

“ Last night, the moon had a golden ring,
And to-night no moon we see! ”
The skipper, he blew a whiff from his pipe,
And a scornful laugh laughed he.

Colder and louder blew the wind,
A gale from the Northeast,
The snow fell hissing in the brine,
And the billows frothed like yeast!

Down came the storm, and smote amain
The vessel in its strength;
She shuddered and paused, like a frightened steed,
Then leaped her cable's length.

“ Come hither! come hither! my little daughter,
And do not tremble so;
For I can weather the roughest gale
That ever wind did blow.”

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat
Against the stinging blast;
He cut a rope from a broken spar,
And bound her to the mast.
Oh say, what may it be? ”
“ 'Tis a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast! ”—
And he steered for the open sea.
“ O father! I hear the church-bells ring,

" O father! I hear the sound of guns,
Oh say, what may it be? "

" Some ship in distress, that cannot live
In such an angry sea! "

" O father! I see a gleaming light,
Oh say, what may it be? "

But the father answered never a word,
A frozen 'corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,
With his face turned to the skies,
The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow
On his fixed and glassy eyes.

Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed
That savèd she might be;
And she thought of Christ, who stilled the wave
On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear
Through the whistling sleet and snow,
Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept
Tow'rds the reef of Norman's Woe

And ever the fitful gusts between
A sound came from the land;
It was the sound of the trampling surf
On the rocks and the hard sea-sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows,
She drifted a dreary wreck,
And a whooping billow swept the crew
Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves
Looked soft as carded wool,
But the cruel rocks, they gored her side
Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,
With the masts went by the board ;
Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank,
Ho ! ho ! the breakers roared !

At daybreak, on the bleak sea-beach,
A fisherman stood aghast,
To see the form of a maiden fair,
Lashed close to a drifting mast.

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
The salt tears in her eyes ;
And he saw her hair, like the brown seaweed,
On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the Hesperus,
In the midnight and the snow !
Christ save us all from a death like this,
On the reef of Norman's Woe !

TO THE WINDS

YE viewless Minstrels of the sky!
I marvel not, in times gone by
 That ye were deified:
For, even in this later day,
To me oft has your power, or play,
 Unearthly thoughts supplied.

Awful your power! when, by your might
You heave the wild waves, crested white,
 Like mountains in your wrath;
Ploughing between them valleys deep,
Which, to the seaman rous'd from sleep,
 Yawn like death's opening path!

Graceful your play! when, round the bower
Where Beauty culls Spring's loveliest flower
 To wreath her dark locks there,
Your gentlest whispers lightly breathe
The leaves between, flit round that wreath,
 And stir her silken hair.

Still, thoughts like these are but of earth,
And you can give far loftier birth:—
 Ye come!—we know not whence!
Ye go!—can mortals trace your flight?
All imperceptible to sight;
 Though audible to sense:

The Sun,—his rise, and set we know ;
The Sea,—we mark its ebb, and flow ;
 The Moon,—her wax, and wane ;
The Stars,—Man knows their courses well,
The Comet's vagrant path can tell :—
 But you his search disdain.

Ye restless, homeless, shapeless things !
Who mock all our imaginings,
 Like spirits in a dream ;
What epithet can words supply
Unto the bard who takes such high
 Unmanageable theme ?

But one ;—to me, when Fancy stirs
My thoughts, ye seem HEAVEN'S MESSENGERS,
 Who leave no path untrod ;
And when, as now, at midnight's hour,
I hear your voice in all its power,
 It seems the voice of God.

25

THE CALL

I WALKED with one whose child had lately died.

We passed the little folk i' the street at play,
When suddenly a clear voice ' Father!' cried;
The man turned quick and glad; sighed; moved
away.

I spoke not, but 'twas given me to discern
The love that watches through th' eternal years;
God surely must so start and quickly turn
Whene'er the cry of ' Father!' strikes his ears.

26

THE HAPPY HEART

ART thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?

O sweet content!

Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplex'd?

O punishment!

Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vex'd
To add to golden numbers, golden numbers?
O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!

Work apace, apace, apace, apace;

Honest labour bears a lovely face;

Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny!

Canst drink the waters of the crisped spring?

O sweet content!

Swimm'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own
tears?

O punishment!

Then he that patiently want's burden bears

No burden bears, but is a king, a king!

O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!

Work apace, apace, apace, apace;

Honest labour bears a lovely face;

Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny!



DEATH THE LEVELLER

THE glories of our blood and state

Are shadows, not substantial things;

There is no armour against fate;

Death lays his icy hand on kings:

Sceptre and crown

Must tumble down,

And in the dust be equal made

With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,

And plant fresh laurels where they kill:

But their strong nerves at last must yield ;
They tame but one another still ;
Early or late
They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath,
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow ;
Then boast no more your mighty deeds.
Upon Death's purple altar now
See where the victor-victim bleeds :
Your heads must come
To the cold tomb.
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in their dust

THE DAFFODILS

I WANDER'D lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
(A host of golden daffodils
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars[•] that shine
And twinkle on the Milky-way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay :
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced ; but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee :—
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company ! *gay*
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought ;
For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude ;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

FEIGNED COURAGE

HORATIO, of ideal courage vain,
Was flourishing in air his father's cane,
And, as the fumes of valour swelled his pate,
Now thought himself *this* hero, and now *that* ;

“ And now,” he cried, “ I will Achilles be ;
My sword I brandish, see, the Trojans flee.
Now I'll be Hector when his angry blade
A lane through heaps of slaughtered Grecians made !
And now by deeds still braver I'll convince,
I am no less than Edward the Black Prince.
Give way, ye coward French !” As thus he spoke,
And aimed in fancy a sufficient stroke
To fix the fate of Cressy or Poitiers
(The nurse relates the hero's fate with tears) ;
He struck his milk-white hand against a nail,
Sees his own blood, and feels his courage fail.
Ah ! where is now that boasted valour flown,
That in the tented field so late was shown ?
Achilles weeps, great Hector hangs his head !
And the Black Prince goes whimpering to bed.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

HALF a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE 57

' Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!' he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

II

' Forward, the Light Brigade!'
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd:
Theirs not ~~to make reply,~~
Theirs not ~~to reason, why,~~
Theirs but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at, with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of hell
Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while

All the world wonder'd :
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke ;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred

V

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the Mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made !
All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made !
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred !

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

THE Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the
sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath
blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew
still.

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his
pride:
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmeared by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

32

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

A CHILD'S STORY

I

HAMELIN Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its walls on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, 'twas a pity

II

Rats!
They fought the dogs, and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own
ladles,

Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats,
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

III

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking;
" 'Tis clear," cried they, " our Mayor's a noddy;
And as for our Corporation—shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can't or won't determine
What's best to rid us of our vermin!
You hope, because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease.
Rouse up, Sirs! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

IV

An hour they sat in council.
At length the Mayor broke silence:
" For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell;
I wish I were a mile hence!
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—
I'm sure my poor head aches again
I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!"

Just as he said this, 'what should hap
At the chamber door but a gentle tap?
" Bless us," cried the Mayor, " what's that?
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"

v

" Come in!"—the Mayor cried, looking bigger;
And in did come the strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red;
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in—
There was no guessing his kith and kin!
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire:
Quoth one: " It's as if my great-grandsire,
Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tomb-stone!"

vi

He advanced to the council-table:
And, " Please your honours," said he, " I'm able,
By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun
That creep, or swim, or fly or run,
After me so as you never saw!

And I chiefly use my charms
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole, and toad, and newt, and viper;
And people call me the Pied Piper."
(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self-same check;
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever staying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
"Yet," said he, "Poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,
Last June, from his huge swarm of gnats;
I eased in Asia the Nizam
Of a monstrous brood of vampyre bats:
And, as for what your brain bewilders,
If I can rid your town of rats
Will you give me a thousand guilders?"
"One? fifty thousand!"—was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

VII

Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,

And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled
Like a candle flame where salt is sprinkled ;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe had uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered ;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling ;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling,
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,

Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
Followed the Piper for their lives.

From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser
Wherein all plunged and perished,
—Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
Swam across and lived to carry
(As he the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary,
Which was, “ At the first shrill notes of the pipe
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples wondrous ripe,
Into a cider-press’s gripe :
And a moving away of pickle-tub boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter casks :|

And it seemed as if a voice
(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, ' Oh rats, rejoice !
The world is grown one vast drysaltery !
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, dinner, supper, luncheon !'
And just as a bulky sugar puncheon,
All ready staved, like a great sun shone
Glorious scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, ' Come, bore me !'
—I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

VIII

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple;
" Go," cried the Mayor, " and get long poles !
Poke out the nests and block up the holes !
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats ! "—when suddenly, up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a, " First, if you please, my thousand
guilders !

IX

A thousand guilders ! The Mayor looked blue;
So did the Corporation too.
For Council dinners made rare havock
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hoek;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish;

To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!
" Besides," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,
" Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink
And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But, as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Besides, our losses have made us thrifty;
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty! "

X

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
" No trifling! I can't wait, beside!
I've promised to visit by dinner time
Baghdad, and accept the prime
Of the Head Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor.
With him I proved no bargain-driver,
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe to another fashion."

XI

" How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I'll brook
Being worse treated than a Cook?

And could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back
And now the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However he turned from South to West,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was the joy in every breast.
" He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop! "

When, lo, as they reached the mountain-side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced and the children follow'd
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast,
Did I say all? No! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say,—
" It's dull in our town since my playmates left!
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me;
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,

And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And every thing was strange and new,
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings;
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And I found myself outside the hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more."

XIV

The Mayor sent East, West, North and South,
To offer the Piper by word of mouth,
Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
And Piper and dancer were gone for ever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,
"And so long after what happened here
On the Twenty-second of July,
Thirteen hundred and seventy-six;"
And the better in memory to fix

The place of the children's last retreat,
They called it, the Pied Piper's Street—
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labour.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
They wrote the story on a column,
And on the great church window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away
And there it stands to this very day
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there is a tribe
Of alien people who ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbours lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison
Into which they were trepanned
Long time ago in a mighty band
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why they don't understand.

xv

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
Of scores out with all men—especially pipers:
And, whether they pipe us free from rats or from mice
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our
promise.

33

THIS WORLD IS ALL A FLEETING SHOW

This world is all a fleeting show,
For man's illusion given;
The smiles of Joy, the tears of Woe,
Deceitful shine, deceitful flow—
There's nothing true but Heaven!

And false the light on Glory's plume,
As fading hues of Even;
And Love, and Hope, and Beauty's bloom,
Are blossoms gather'd for the tomb,—
There's nothing bright but Heaven!

Poor wanderers of a stormy day,
From wave to wave we're driven,
And Fancy's flash, and Reason's ray,
Serve but to light the troubled way—
There's nothing calm but Heaven!

34

IVAN THE CZAR

He sat in silence on the ground,
The old and haughty Czar,
Lonely, though princes girt him round,
And leaders of the war;

He had cast his jewelled sabre,
That many a field had won,
To the earth beside his youthful dead-
His fair and first-born son.

With a robe of ermine for its bed
Was laid that form of clay,
Where the light, a stormy sunset shed,
Through the rich tent made way;
And a sad and solemn beauty
On the pallid face came down,
Which the lord of nations mutely watched,
In the dust, with his renown

Low tones at last of woe and fear
From his full bosom broke;
A mournful thing it was to hear
How then the proud man spoke,
The voice that through the combat
Had shouted far and high,
Came forth in strange, dull, hollow tones,
Burdened with agony.

“ There is no crimson on thy cheek,
And on thy lip no breath;
I call thee, and thou dost not speak;
They tell me this is death!
And fearful things are whispering
That I the deed have done!
For the honour of thy father's name,
Look up, look up, my son.

" Well might I know death's hue and mien;
But on thine aspect, boy,
What, till this moment, have I seen
Save pride and tameless joy?
Swiftest thou wert to battle,
And bravest there of all;
How could I think a warrior's frame
Thus like a flower should fall?

" I will not bear that still cold look—
Rise up, thou fierce and free!
Wake as the storm wakes! I will brook
All, save this calm, from thee
Lift brightly up, and proudly,
Once more thy kindling eyes;
Hath my word lost its power on earth?
I say to thee, arise!

" Didst thou not know I loved thee well?
Thou didst not! and art gone
In bitterness of soul, to dwell
Where man must dwell alone
Come back, young fiery spirit!
If but one hour, to learn
The secrets of the folded heart,
That seemed to thee so stern.

" Thou wert the first, fair child,
That in mine arms I pressed;
Thou wert the bright one that hast smiled
Like summer on my breast.

I reared thee as an eagle,
To the chase thy steps I led,
I bore thee on my battle-horse,—
I look upon thee—dead !

“ Lay down my warlike banners here,
Never again to wave,
And bury my red sword and spear,
Chiefs, in my first-born's grave;
And leave me! I have conquered,
I have slain—my work is done!
Whom have I slain? Ye answer not;
Thou too art mute, my son! ”

And thus his wild lament was poured
Through the dark resounding night,
And the battle knew no more his sword,
Nor the foaming steed his might.
He heard strange voices moaning
In every wind that sighed;
From the searching stars of heaven he shrank—
Humbly the conqueror died

THE OLD ARM-CHAIR

I LOVE it, I love it, and who shall dare
To chide me for loving that old arm-chair?
I have treasured it long as a sainted prize,
I've bedewed it with tears, and embalmed it
with sighs;
'Tis bound by a thousand bands to my heart,
Not a tie will break, not a link will start.
Would you learn the spell? A mother sat there,
And a sacred thing is that old arm-chair.

In childhood's hour I lingered near
The hallowed seat with list'ning ear;
And gentle words that mother would give,
To fit me to die, and teach me to live;
She told me shame would never betide,
With truth for my creed, and God for my guide;
She taught me to lisp my earliest prayer
As I knelt beside that old arm-chair.

I sat and watched her many a day,
When her eyes grew dim and her locks were gray,
And I almost worshipped her when she smiled,
And turned from her Bible to bless her child.
Years rolled on; but the last one sped—
My idol was shattered, my earth-star fled:
I learnt how much the heart can bear
When I saw her die in that old arm-chair.

'Tis past! 'tis past! But I gaze on it now
 With quivering breath and throbbing brow.
 'Twas there she nursed me,—'twas there she
 died,

And memory flows with lava tide.
 Say it is folly and deem me weak,
 While the scalding tears run down my cheek,
 But I love it,—I love it! and cannot tear
 My soul from my mother's old arm-chair.

 36

LORD ULLIN'S DAUGHTER

A CHIEFTAIN to the Highlands bound
 Cries ' Boatman, do not tarry!
 And I'll give thee a silver pound
 To row us o'er the ferry.'

' Now who be ye would cross Lochgyle,
 This dark and stormy water?'
 ' O, I'm the chief of Ulva's isle,
 And this Lord Ullin's daughter.

' And fast before her father's men
 Three days we've fled together,
 For, should he find us in the glen,
 My blood would stain the heather.

' His horsemen hard behind us ride;
Should they our steps discover,
Then who will cheer my bonny bride
When they have slain her lover?'

Outspoke the hardy Highland wight,
'I'll go, my chief! I'm ready;
It is not for your silver bright,
But for your winsome lady

' And, by my word! the bonny bird
In danger shall not tarry;
So though the waves are raging white
I'll row you o'er the ferry.'

By this the storm grew loud apace,
The water-wraith was shrieking;
And in the scowl of heaven each face
Grew dark as they were speaking.

But still, as wilder blew the wind,
And as the night grew drearer,
Adown the glen rode armed men—
Their trampling sounded nearer.

' O haste thee, haste!' the lady cries,
' Though tempests round us gather;
I'll meet the raging of the skies,
But not an angry father.'

The boat has left a stormy land,
A stormy sea before her,—
When, oh! too strong for human hand,
The tempest gathered o'er her.

And still they rowed amidst the roar
Of waters fast prevailing:
Lord Ullin reached that fatal shore,—
His wrath was changed to wailing

For sore dismayed, through storm and shade,
His child he did discover:
One lovely hand she stretched for aid,
And one was round her lover.

'Come back! come back!' he cried in grief
Across the stormy water:
'And I'll forgive your Highland chief,
My daughter! oh my daughter!'

'Twas vain: the loud waves lashed the shore,
Return or aid preventing;
The waters wild went o'er his child,
And he was left lamenting.

37

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

I

THE King was on his throne :
 The satraps throng'd the hall :
A thousand bright lamps shone
 O'er that high festival.
A thousand cups of gold,
 In Judah deem'd divine
Jehovah's vessels, hold
 The godless Heathen's wine

II

In that same hour and hall,
 The fingers of a hand
Came forth against the wall,
 And wrote as if on sand,
The fingers of a man;
 A solitary hand
Along the letters ran,
 And traced them like a wand.

III

The monarch saw, and shook,
 And bade no more rejoice;
All bloodless wax'd his look,
 And tremulous his voice

“ Let the man of lore appear,
The wisest of the earth,
And expound the words of fear,
Which mar our royal mirth

IV

Chaldea's seers are good,
But here they have no skill;
And the unknown letters stood
Untold and awful still
And Babel's men of age
Are wise and deep in lore,
But now they were not sage,
They saw—but knew no more

V

A captive in the land,
A stranger and a youth,
He heard the king's command,
He saw that writing's truth,
The lamps around were bright,
The prophecy in view,
He read it on that night,
The morrow proved it true.

VI

“ Belshazzar's grave is made,
His kingdom pass'd away
He, in the balance weigh'd
Is light and worthless clay;

The shroud his robe of state,
 His canopy the stone;
 The Mede is at his gate!
 The Persian on his throne!"

38

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX

I

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
 I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
 ' Good speed! ' cried the watch, as the gate-bolts
 undrew;
 " Speed! " echoed the wall to us galloping through;
 Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
 And into the midnight we galloped abreast

II

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace
 Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our
 place;
 I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
 Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,
 Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
 Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

III

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew, and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be;
And from Mechlin church-steeple we heard the
half-chime,
So Joris broke' silence with, " Yet there is time!"

IV

At Aerschot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one.
To stare thro' the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze as some bluff river headland its spray

V

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent
back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

VI

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, " Stay
spur;
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,

We'll remember at Aix"—for one heard the quick
 wleeze
 Of her chest, saw her stretched neck and staggering
 knees,
 And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
 As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

VII

So we were left galloping, Joris and I,
 Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
 The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
 'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like
 chaff;
 Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
 And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

VIII

"How they'll greet us!"—and all in a moment his
 roan
 Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
 And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
 Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
 With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
 And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

IX

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,
 Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
 Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
 Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without
 peer;

Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad
or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

X

And all I remember is, friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground,
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news
from Ghent.

39

THE BEGGAR MAID

Her arms across her breast she laid;
She was more fair than words can say.
But footed came the beggar maid
Before the king Cophetua
In robe and crown the king stepped down,
To meet and greet her on her way;
'It is no wonder,' said the lords,
'She is more beautiful than day.'

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
She in her poor attire was seen:
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.

So sweet a face, such angel['] grace,
In all that land had never been :
Cophetua sware a royal oath :
 ' This beggar maid shall be my queen ! '

40

ODE TO EVENING

HAIL meek-eyed maiden, clad in sober gray,
Whose soft approach the weary woodman loves ;
As homeward bent to kiss his prattling babes,
Jocund he whistles through the twilight groves.

When Phœbus sinks behind the gilded hills,
You lightly o'er the misty meadows walk ;
The drooping daisies bathe in honey-dews,
And nurse the nodding violet's tender stalk

The panting Dryads, that in day's fierce heat
To inmost bowers and cooling caverns ran,
Return to trip in wanton evening dance ;
Old Silvan too returns, and laughing Pan.

To the deep wood the clamorous rocks repair,
Light skims the swallow o'er the watery scene ;
And from the sheep-cote and fresh furrowed field
Stout ploughmen meet, to wrestle on the green.

The swain, that artless sings on yonder rock,
His supping sheep and lengthening shadow spies;
Pleased with the cool, the calm, refreshful hour,
And with hoarse humming of unnumbered flies.

Now every passion sleeps; desponding Love,
And pining Envy, ever-restless Pride;
A holy calm creeps o'er my peaceful soul,
Anger and mad Ambition's storms subside.

O modest Evening! oft let me appear
A wandering votary in thy pensive train;
Listening to every wildly warbling throat
That fills with farewell sweet thy darkening plain.

41

A CHILD'S THOUGHT OF GOD

I

THEY say that God lives very high;
But if you look above the pines
You cannot see our God; and why?

II

And if you dip down in the mines
You never see Him in the gold;
Though from Him all that's glory shines

III

God is so good, He wears a fold
Of heaven and earth across His face—
Like secrets kept, for love, untold

IV

But still I feel that His embrace
Slides down by thrills, through all things
made,
Through sight and sound of every place

V

As if my tender mother laid
On my shut lips her kisses' pressure,
Half waking me at night, and said
" Who kissed you through the dark, dear
guesser?

THE POET'S SONG

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
He pass'd by the town and out of the street,
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,
And waves of shadow went over the wheat,
And he sat him down in a lonely place,
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the bee,
The snake slipt under a spray,
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,
And stared, with his foot on the prey,
And the nightingale thought, ' I have sung many
songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will be
When the years have died away '

THE PALM TREE

It waved not through an eastern sky,
Beside a fount of Araby;
It was not fanned by southern breeze
In some green isle of Indian seas,
Nor did its graceful shadow sleep
O'er stream, of Afric, lone and deep.

But fair the exile palm-tree grew
Midst foliage of no kindred hue;
Through the laburnum's dropping gold
Rose the light shaft of orient mould,
And Europe's violets, faintly sweet,
Purpled the moss-beds at its feet.

Strange looked it there—the willow streamed
Where silvery waters near it gleamed;
The line-bough lured the honey-bee
To murmur by the desert's tree,
And showers of snowy roses made
A lustre in its fan-like shade

There came an eve of festal hours—
Rich music filled that garden's bowers;
Lamps that from flowering branches hung,
On sparks of dew soft colour flung,
And bright forms glanced—a fairy show—
Under the blossoms to and fro.

But one, a lone one, midst the throng,
Seemed reckless of all dance or song:
He was a youth of dusky mien,
Whereon the Indian sun had been,
Of crested brow, and long black hair—
A stranger, like the palm-tree there.

And slowly, sadly, moved his plumes,
Glittering athwart the leafy glooms:
He passed the pale green olives by,
Nor won the chestnut-flowers his eye;
But when to that sole palm he came,
Then shot a rapture through his frame!

To him, to him, its rustling spoke
The silence of his soul it broke!
It whispered of his own bright isle,
That lit the ocean with a smile;

Aye, to his ear that native tone
Had something of the sea-wave's moan!

His mother's cabin home, that lay
Where feathery cocoas fringed the bay;
The dashing of his brethren's oar,
The conch-note heard along the shore;—
All through his wakening bosom swept:
He clasped his country's tree and wept!

Oh! scorn him not!—the strength, whereby
The patriot girds himself to die,
Th' unconquerable power, which fills
The freeman battling on his hills,
These have one fountain deep and clear—
The same whence gushed that child-like tear!

44

SONNET

WRITTEN ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGES

How fraught with music, beauty, and repose,
This holy time, and solitude profound!
The lingering day along the mountain glows;
With songs of birds the twilight woods resound.
Through the soft gloom, yon sacred fanes around,

The radiant fly its mimic lightning throws.
 Fair Gunga's stream along the green vale flows,
 And gently breathes a thought-awakening sound!
 Such hour and scene my spirit loves to hail,
 When nature's smile is so divinely sweet—
 When every note that trembles on the gale,
 Seems caught from realms untrod by mortal feet—
 Where everlasting harmonies prevail—
 Where rise the purified, their God to greet

45

THE TREASURES OF THE DEEP

WHAT hidest thou in thy treasure caves and cells,
 Thou hollow-sounding and mysterious main?—
 Pale glistening pearls, and rainbow-coloured shells
 Bright things which gleam unrecked of, and in vain.
 Keep, keep thy riches, melancholy sea!
 We ask not such from thee.

Yet more, the depths have more! What wealth untold,
 Far down, and shining through their stillness lies!
 Thou hast the starry gems, the burning gold,
 Won from ten thousand royal argosies.—
 Sweep o'er thy spoils, thou wild and wra'ful main!
 Earth claims not *these* again.

Yet more, the depths have more! Thy waves have
rolled

Above the cities of a world gone by!
Sand hath filled up the palaces of old,
Seaweed o'ergrown the halls of revelry.—
Dash o'er them, ocean! in thy scornful play:
Man yields them to decay.

Yet more! the billows and the depths have more!
High hearts and brave are gathered to thy breast!
They hear not now the booming waters roar,
The battle-thunders will not break their rest —
Keep thy red gold and gems, thou stormy grave!
Give back the true and brave!

Give back the lost and lovely!—those for whom
The place was kept at board and hearth so long,
The prayer went up through midnight's breathless
gloom,
And the vain yearning woke 'midst festal song!
Hold fast thy buried isles, thy towers o'erthrown—
But all is not thine own

To thee the love of woman hath gone down,
Dark flow thy tides o'er manhood's noble head,
O'er youth's bright locks, and beauty's flowery
crown:

Yet must thou hear a voice—Restore the dead!
Earth shall reclaim her precious things from thee!—
Restore the dead, thou sea!

46

LULLABY OF AN INFANT CHIEF

(1815)

O hush thee, my babie, thy sire was a knight,
Thy mother a lady, both lovely and bright;
The woods and the glens, from the towers which we
see,

They all are belonging, dear babie, to thee.

O ho ro, i ri ri, cadul gu lo,

O ho ro, i ri ri, &c.

O fear not the bugle, though loudly it blows,
It calls but the warders that guard thy repose;
Their bows would be bended, their blades would be
red,

Ere the step of a foeman drew near to thy bed.

O ho ro, i ri ri, &c.

O hush thee, my babie, the time soon will come
When thy sleep shall be broken by trumpet and drum;
Then hush thee, my darling, take rest while you may,
For strife comes with manhood, and waking with day.

O ho ro, i ri ri, &c.

47

THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE GLOWWORM

A NIGHTINGALE that all day long
Had cheer'd the village with its song,
Nor yet at eve his note suspended,
Nor yet when eventide was ended,
Began to feel, as well he might,
The keen demands of appetite;
When looking eagerly around,
He spied far off, upon the ground,
A something shining in the dark,
And knew the Glowworm by his spark;
So, stooping down from hawthorn top,
He thought to put him in his crop '—
The worm, aware of his intent,
Harangued him thus, right eloquent:
' Did you admire my lamp,' quoth he,
' As much as I your minstrelsy,
You would abhor to do me wrong,
As much as I to spoil your song:
For 'twas the self-same Power Divine
Taught you to sing, and me to shine;
That you with music, I with light,
Might beautify and cheer the night.'
The songster heard this short oration,
And warbling out his approbation,
Released him, as my story tells,
And found a supper somewhere else.

HOHENLINDEN

ON Linden, when the sun was low,
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow,
And dark as winter was the flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly:

But Linden saw another sight,
When the drum beat, at dead of night,
Commanding fires of death to light
The darkness of her scenery.

By torch and trumpet fast array'd,
Each horseman drew his battle-blade,
And furious every charger neigh'd,
To join the dreadful revelry

Then shook the hills with thunder riven,
Then rush'd the steed to battle driven,
And louder than the bolts of heaven,
Far flash'd the red artillery.

But redder yet that light shall glow
On Linden's hills of stained snow,
And bloodier yet the torrent flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

'Tis morn, but scarce yon level sun
Can pierce the war-clouds' rolling dun,
Where furious Frank, and fiery Hun,
Shout in their sulph'rous canopy.

The combat deepens On, ye brave,
Who rush to glory, or to grave!
Wave, Munich! all thy banners wave,
And charge with all thy chivalry!

Few, few, shall part where many meet!
The snow shall be their winding-sheet,
And every turf beneath their feet
Shall be a soldier's sepulchre

49

SUMMER RAIN

THICK lay the dust, uncomfortably white,
In glaring mimicry of Arab sand
The woods and mountains slept in hazy light
The meadows looked athirst and tawny tanned;
The little rills had left their channels bare,
With scarce a pool to witness what they were,
And the shrunk river gleamed 'mid oozy stones,
That stared like any famished giant's bones
Sudden the hills grew black, and hot as stove
The air beneath; it was a toil to be
There was a growling as of angry Jove,
Provoked by Juno's prying jealousy—
A flash—a crash—the firmament was split,
And down it came in drops—the smallest fit
To drown a bee in fox-glove bell conceal'd;
Joy filled the brook, and comfort cheered the field.

HYMN FOR A RAINY SUNDAY

THE rain may soak my garments through,
The rain may wet my face,
O'erflow the road on which I walk,
And slow my feet apace.

But rain my soul can never move,
My spirits never damp,
Nor faith becloud, good-nature drown,
Nor temper's gates unclamp.

As in the greater shocks of life
A latent strength sustains,
So 'm'dst such trivial glooms as rain
An inner gladness reigns.

Then let the heavens open wide,
Then let the rains descend,
For thus does God refresh the earth
And ev'ry man befriend.

Our lives are built upon a Rock
No rain can wash away ;
God help our souls take deeper root
And stand unmoved alway.

51

CITIES AND THRONES AND POWERS

CITIES and Thrones and Powers,
Stand in Time's eye,
Almost as long as flowers,
Which daily die.
But, as new buds put forth
To glad new men,
Out of the spent and unconsidered Earth
The Cities rise again.

This season's Daffodil,
She never hears
What change, what chance, what chill,
Cut down last year's:
But with bold countenance,
And knowledge small,
Esteems her seven days' continuance
To be perpetual

So Time that is o'er-kind,
To all that be,
Ordains us e'en as blind,
As bold as she:
That in our very death,
And burial sure,
Shadow to shadow, well persuaded, saith,
" See how our works endure!"

TUBAL CAIN

OLD Tubal Cain was a man of might
In the days when Earth was young;
By the fierce red light of his furnace bright
The strokes of his hammer rung;
And he lifted high his brawny hand
On the iron glowing clear,
Till the sparks rushed out in scarlet showers,
As he fashioned the sword and spear.
And he sang: ' Hurra for my handiwork!
Hurra for the spear and sword!
Hurra for the hand that shall wield them well,
For he shall be king and lord! '

To Tubal Cain came many a one,
As he wrought by his roaring fire,
And each one prayed for a strong steel blade
As the crown of his desire:
And he made them weapons sharp and strong,
Till they shouted loud for glee,
And gave him gifts of pearl and gold,
And spoils of the forest free.
And they sang: ' Hurra for Tubal Cain,
Who has given us strength anew!
Hurra for the smith, hurra for the fire,
And hurra for the metal true! '

But a sudden change came o'er his heart
Ere the setting of the sun,
And Tubal Cain was filled with pain
For the evil he had done;
He saw that men, with rage and hate,
Made war upon their kind,
That the land was red with the blood they shed,
In their lust for carnage blind.
And he said: 'Alas! that ever I made,
Or that skill of mine should plan,
The spear and the sword for men whose joy
Is to slay their fellow-man!'

And for many a day old Tubal Cain
Sat brooding o'er his woe;
And his hand forbore to smite the ore,
And his furnace smouldered low.
But he rose at last with a cheerful face,
And a bright courageous eye,
And bared his strong right arm for work,
While the quick flames mounted high.
And he sang: 'Hurra for my handiwork!'
And the red sparks lit the air;
'Not alone for the blade was the bright steel made;
And he fashioned the first ploughshare.

And men, taught wisdom from the past,
In friendship joined their hands,
Hung the sword in the hall, the spear on the wall,
And ploughed the willing lands;

And sang: ' Hurra for Tubal Cain!
Our staunch good friend is he;
And for the ploughshare and the plough
To him our praise shall be.
But while oppression lifts its head,
Or a tyrant would be lord,
Though we may thank him for the plough,
We'll not forget the sword! '

THE POPLAR-FIELD

THE poplars are fell'd, farewell to the shade
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade,
The winds play no longer, and sing in the leaves,
Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elaps'd since I first took a view
Of my favourite field and the bank where they grew,
And now in the grass behold they are laid,
And the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade.

The blackbird has fled to another retreat
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,
And the scene where his melody charm'd me before,
Resounds with his sweet flowing ditty no more. `

My fugitive years are all hasting away,
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,
Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if any thing can,
To muse on the perishing pleasures of man;
Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,
Have a being less durable even than he.

54

THE GIFTS OF GOD

WHEN God at first made Man,
Having a glass of blessing standing by;
Let us (said He) pour on him all we can:
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way;
Then beauty flow'd, then wisdom, honour, pleasure,
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone, of all His treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

For if I should (said He)
Bestow this jewel also on My creature,
He would adore My gifts instead of Me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature,
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness :
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness led him not, yet weariness
May toss him to My breast.

55

THE CHILDREN'S SONG

LAND of our Birth, we pledge to thee
Our love and toil in the years to be ;
When we are grown and take our place,
As men and women with our race.

Father in Heaven who lovest all,
Oh help thy children when they call ;
That they may build from age to age,
An undefiled heritage.

Teach us to bear the yoke in youth,
With steadfastness and careful truth ;
That, in our time, Thy Grace may give
The Truth whereby the Nations live.

Teach us to rule ourselves always,
Controlled and cleanly night and day ;
That we may bring, if need arise,
No maimed or worthless sacrifice.

Teach us to look in all our ends,
On Thee for judge, and not our friends;
That we, with Thee, may walk uncowed
By fear or favour of the crowd.

Teach us the Strength that cannot seek,
By deed or thought, to hurt the weak;
That, under Thee, we may possess
Man's strength to comfort man's distress.

Teach us Delight in simple things,
And Mirth that has no bitter springs;
Forgiveness free of evil done,
And Love to all men 'neath the sun!

*Land of our Birth, our faith, our pride,
For whose dear sake our fathers died;
Oh Motherland, we pledge to thee,
Head, heart, and hand through the years to be!*

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

NEAR yonder copse, where once the garden smiled
And still where many a garden flower grows wild;
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;

Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place;
Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learnt to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train;
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain:
The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away,
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch and showed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings leaned to Virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.
Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt and pain, by turns dismayed,

The reverend championⁱ stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.
The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;
Even children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest;
Their welfare pleased him and their cares distrest:
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven;
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Tho' round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view;—
I knew him well, and every truant knew:
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;

Full well the busy whisper circling round,
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned.
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault;
The village all declared how much he knew
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge:
In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,
For, even tho' vanquished, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.
But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumphed is forgot.

MAHMOUD

I HAVE just read a most amazing thing,
A true and noble story of a king:
And to show all men, by these presents, how
Good kings can please a Liberal, even now
I'll vent the warmth it gave me in a verse:
But recollect—these kings and emperors
Are very scarce; and when they do appear,
Had better not have graced that drunken sphere,
Which hurts the few whose brains can bear it best,

In three days' time, with haggard eyes and beard,
 And shaken voice, the suitor re-appeared,
 And said 'He's come.'—Mahmoud said not a word,
 But rose, and took four slaves, each with a sword,
 And went with the vexed man. They reach the place,
 And hear a voice, and see a female face,
 That to the window fluttered in affright.
 'Go in,' said Mahmoud, 'and put out the light;
 But tell the females first to leave the room;
 And when the drunkard follows them, we come.'

The man went in. There was a cry, and hark!
 A table falls, the window is struck dark;
 Forth rush the breathless women; and behind
 With curses comes the fiend in desperate mind.
 In vain: the sabres soon cut short the strife,
 And chop the shrieking wretch, and drink his bloody
 life.

'Now *light* the light,' the Sultan cried aloud.
 'Twas done; he took it in his hand, and bowed
 Over the corpse, and looked upon the face;
 Then turned and knelt beside it in the place,
 And said a prayer, and from his lips there crept
 Some gentle words of pleasure, and he wept.

In reverent silence the spectators wait,
 Then bring him at his call both wine and meat;
 And when he had refreshed his noble heart,
 He bade his host be blest, and rose up to depart.

The man amazed, all mildness now, and tears,
 Fell at the Sultan's feet, with many prayers,

And begged him to vouchsafe to tell his slave,
 The reason first of that command he gave,
 About the light; then, when he saw the face,
 Why he knelt down; and lastly, how it was,
 That fare so poor as his detained him in the place.

The Sultan said, with much humanity,
 ' Since first I saw thee come, and heard thy cry,
 I could not get it from my head, that one
 By whom such daring villainies were done,
 Must be some lord of mine perhaps a lawless son.
 Whoe'er he was, I knew my task, but feared
 A father's heart, in case the worst appeared.
 For this I had the light put out. But when
 I saw the face, and found a stranger slain,
 I knelt and thanked the sovereign arbiter,
 Whose work I had performed through pain and fear;
 And then I rose, and was refreshed with food,
 The first time since thou cam'st, and marr'dst my
 solitude.'

 58

YUSSOUF

A STRANGER came one night to Yussouf's tent,
 Saying, " Behold one outcast and in dread,
 Against whose life the bow of power is bent,
 Who flies, and hath not where to lay his head;
 I come to thee for shelter and for food,
 To Yussouf, called through all our tribes The
 Good.' "

"This tent is mine," said Yussouf, "but no
more

Than it is God's; come in, and be at peace;
Freely shalt thou partake of all my store
As I of His who buildeth over these
Our tents His glorious roof of night and day,
And at Whose door none ever yet heard Nay."

So Yussouf entertained his guest that night,
And, waking him ere day, said: "Here is gold;
My swiftest horse is saddled for thy flight;
Depart before the prying day grow bold." . .
As one lamp lights another, nor grows less,
So nobleness enkindleth nobleness.

That inward light the stranger's face made grand,
Which shines from all self-conquest; kneeling low, "
He bowed his forehead upon Yussouf's hand,
Sobbing: "O Sheik, I cannot leave thee so;
I will repay thee; all this thou hast done
Unto that Ibrahim who slew thy son!"

"Take thrice the gold," said Yussouf, "for with thee
Into the desert, never to return,
My one black thought shall ride away from me;
First-born, for whom by day and night I yearn,
Balanced and just are all of God's decrees;
Thou art avenged, my first-born, sleep in peace!"

59

THE MAY QUEEN

You must wake and call me early, call me early,
mother dear;
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad
New-year;
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest^f
merriest day;
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

There's many a black black eye, they say, but none
so bright as mine;
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caro-
line:
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they
say,
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never
wake,
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to
break:
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and
garlands gay,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see,
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-
tree?

He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him
yesterday,—

But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in ,
white,

And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of
light

They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they
say,

For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never
be:

They say his heart is breaking, mother—what is that
to me?

There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer
day,

And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the
Queen;

For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from far
away,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its wavy
bowers,
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet
cuckoo-flowers;
And the wild' marsh-marigold shines like fire in
swamps and hollows grey,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May. .

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the
meadow grass,
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as
they pass,
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the
livelong day.
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the
hill,
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance
and play,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me Early, call me early,
 mother dear,
 To-morrow 'll be the happiest time of all the glad
 New-year.
 To-morrow 'll be of all the year the maddest merriest
 day,
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
 Queen o' the May.

60

EVENING ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGES

I WANDERED thoughtfully by Ganga's shore,
 While the broad sun upon the slumbering wave
 Its last faint flush of golden radiance gave,
 And tinged with tenderest hues some ruins hoar.
 Methinks this earth had never known before
 A calm so deep—'twas silent as the grave.
 The smallest bird its light wing could not lave
 In the smooth flood, nor from the green wood soar
 (If but the tiniest branch its pinions stirred,
 Or shook the dew-drops from the leaves,) unheard.
 Like pictured shadows 'gainst the western beam,
 The dark boats slept, while each lone helmsman stood
 Still as a statue!—the strange quietude
 Enthralled my soul like some mysterious dream.

61

FOR THE FALLEN

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds
uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables at home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time:
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are
known
As the stars are known to the Night.

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our,
darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

62

FROLIC

THE children were shouting together
And racing along the sands,
A glimmer of dancing shadows,
A dovelike flutter of hands.

The stars were shouting in heaven,
The sun was chasing the moon:
The game was the same as the children's,
They danced to the self-same tune.

The whole of the world was merry,
One joy from the vale to the height,
Where the blue woods of twilight encircled
The lovely lawns of the light.

63

ON A SPANIEL CALLED BEAU
KILLING A YOUNG BIRD

A SPANIEL, Beau, that fares like you,
Well-fed, and at his ease,
Should wiser be, than to pursue
Each trifle that he sees.

But you have kill'd a tiny bird,
Which flew not till to-day,
Against my orders, whom you heard
Forbidding you the prey

Nor did you kill, that you might eat,
And ease a doggish pain,
For him, though chas'd with furious heat,
You left where he was slain

Nor was he of the thievish sort,
Or one whom blood allures,
But innocent was all his sport,
Whom you have torn for yours.

My dog! what remedy remains,
Since, teach you all I can,
I see you, after all my pains,
So much resemble man!

ABOU BEN ADHEM AND THE ANGEL

ABOU Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
 Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
 And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
 Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
 An angel writing in a book of gold:—
 Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
 And to the presence in the room he said,
 "What writest thou?"—The vision, raised its head,
 And with a look made of all sweet accord,
 Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."
 "And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
 Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
 But cheerly still; and said, "I pray thee then,
 Write me as one that loves his fellow men."
 The angel wrote, and vanish'd. The next night
 It came again with a great wakening light,
 And show'd the names whom love of God had blessed,
 And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

65

THE KINGFISHER

It was the Rainbow gave thee birth,
And left thee all her lovely hues;
And, as her mother's name was Tears,
So runs it in thy blood to choose
For haunts the lonely pools, and keep
In company with trees that weep.

Go you and, with such glorious hues,
Live with proud Peacocks in green parks;
On lawns as smooth as shining glass,
Let every feather show its mark;
Get thee on boughs and clap thy wings
Before the windows of proud kings.

Nay, lovely Bird, thou art not vain;
Thou hast no proud ambitious mind;
I also love a quiet place
That's green, away from all mankind;
A lonely pool, and let a tree
Sigh with her bosom over me.

THE TROSSACKS

I

THE western waves of ebbing day,
Roll'd o'er the glen their level way;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splinter'd pinnacle;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
The rocky summits, split and rent
Form'd turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seem'd fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever deck'd,
Or mosque of eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lack'd they many a banner fair;
For, from their shiver'd brows display'd,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dewdrop sheen,
The brier-rose fell in streamers green,

And creeping shrubs, of thousand dyes,
Waved in the west wind's summer sighs.

II

Boon nature scatter'd free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child,
Here eglantine embalm'd the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there;
The primrose pale and violet flower,
Found in each cliff a narrow bower;
Fox-glove and night-shade; side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Group'd their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath
Gray birch and aspen wept beneath;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock;
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shatter'd trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seem'd the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrow'd sky.
Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
Where glist'ning streamers waved and danced
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.

III

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,

Affording scarce such breadth of brim,
As served the wild duck's brood to swim,
Lost for a space, through thickest veering
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
Could on the dark blue mirror trace;
And farther as the hunter stray'd,
Still broader sweep its channels made.
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
Emerging from entangled wood,
But wave-encircled, seem'd to float,
Like castle girdled with its moat;
Yet broader floods extending still
Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in an inland sea.

IV

And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb, with footing nice
A far projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid;
And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting sun.
One burnished sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd,
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,

And mountains, that like giants stand
To sentinel enchanted land.
High on the south, huge Ben Venue
Down on the lake in masses threw
Craggs, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurl'd
The fragments of an earlier world;
A wildering forest feather'd o'er
His ruin'd sides and summit hoar,
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben An heaved high his forehead bare.

v

From the steep promontory gazed
The stranger, raptured and amazed.
And, "What a scene were here," he cried,
"For princely pomp, or churchman's pride!
On this bold brow, a lordly tower;
In that soft vale, a lady's bower;
On yonder meadow, far away,
The turrets of a cloister gray;
How blithely might the bugle-horn
Chide, on the lake, the lingering morn!
How sweet, at eve, the lover's lute
Chime, when the groves were still and mute
And, when the midnight moon should lave
Her forehead in the silver wave,
How solemn on the ear would come
The holy matins' distant hum,
While the deep peal's commanding tone
Should wake, in yonder islet lone,

A sainted hermit from his^o cell,
To drop a bead with every knell—
And bugle, lute and bell, and all,
Should each bewilder'd stranger call
To friendly feast, and lighted hall."

67

FAREWELL TO ENGLAND

" ADIEU, adieu! my native shore
Fades o'er the waters blue;
The night-winds sigh, the breakers roar,
And shrieks the wild sea-mew.
Yon Sun that sets upon the sea
We follow in his flight;
Farewell awhile to him, and thee,
My native land—Good night!

" A few short hours and he will rise
To give the morrow birth;
And I shall hail the main and skies
But not my mother earth.
Deserted is my own good hall,
Its hearth is desolate;
Wild weeds are gathering on the wall;
My dog howls at the gate.

“ Come hither, nither my little page,
Why dost thou weep and wail?
Or dost thou dread the billow's rage,
Or tremble at the gale?
But dash the tear-drop from thine eye:
Our ship is swift and strong:
Our fleetest falcon scarce can fly
More merrily along.”

“ My father blessed me fervently,
Yet did not much complain;
But sorely will my mother sigh
Till I come back again.”—
“ Enough, enough, my little lad;
Such tears become thine eye;
If I thy guileless bosom had,
Mine own would not be dry.”

“ Come hither, hither, my staunch yeoman,
Why dost thou look so pale?
Or dost thou dread a French foeman?
Or shiver at the gale?”
“ Deem'st thou I tremble for my life?
Sir Childe, I'm not so weak;
But thinking on an absent wife
Will blanch a faithful cheek.

“ My spouse and boys dwell near thy hall,
Along the bordering lake,
And when they on their father call,
—What answer shall she make?”

“ Enough, enough, my yeoman good,
Thy grief let none gainsay;
But I, who am of lighter mood,
Will laugh to flee away.”

“ And now I’m in the world alone,
Upon the wide, wide sea:
But why should I for others groan
When none will sigh for me?
Perchance my dog will whine in vain,
Till fed by stranger hands;
But long ere I come back again,
He’d tear me where he stands.

“ With thee, my bark, I’ll swiftly go
Athwart the foaming brine;
Nor care what land thou bear’st me to,
So not again to mine.
Welcome, welcome, ye dark-blue waves
And when you fail my sight,
Welcome, ye deserts, and ye caves!
My native land—Good night!”

CATO'S SOLILOQUY ON DEATH

It must be so—Plato, thou reasonest well.
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror
Of falling into nought? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis Heaven itself, that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.
Eternity! thou pleasing, dreadful thought!
Through what variety of untried being,
Through what new scenes and changes must we pass?
The wide, the unbounded prospect lies before me:
But shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it.
Here will I hold. If there's a Power above,
(And that there is all nature cries aloud,
Through all her works) he must delight in virtue;
And that which he delights in must be happy.
But when! or where—this world was made for Cæsar
I'm weary of conjectures—this must end them.

[*Laying his hand on his sword.*]

Thus I am doubly armed: my death and life,
My bane and antidote, are both before me.
This in a moment brings me to an end:
But this informs me I shall never die.

The soul, secured in her existence, smiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.
The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years, .
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds.
What means this heaviness that hangs upon me?
This lethargy that creeps through all my senses?
Nature oppressed, and harassed out with care,
Sinks down to rest. This once I'll favour her,
That my awakened soul may take her flight,
Renewed in all her strength, and fresh with life,
An offering fit for heaven. Let guilt or fear
Disturb man's rest; Cato knows neither of them:
Indifferent in his choice to sleep or die.

THE COUNCIL OF HORSES

UPON a time a neighing steed,
Who grazed among a num'rous breed
With mutiny had fired the train,
And spread dissension through the plain.
On matters that concern'd the state
The council met in grand debate.

A colt, whose ey-balls flamed with ire,
Elate with strength and youthful fire,
In haste stept forth before the rest,
And thus the list'ning throng address:

Good gods! how abject is our race,
Condemn'd to slav'ry and disgrace!
Shall we our servitude retain,
Because our sires have borne the chain?
Consider, friends, your strength and might;
'Tis conquest to assert your right.
How cumbrous is the gilded coach!
The pride of man is our reproach.
Were we design'd for daily toil,
To drag the ploughshare through the soil,
To sweat in harness through the road,
To groan beneath the carrier's load?
How feeble are the two-legg'd kind!
What force is in our nerves combined!
Shall then our nobler jaws submit
To foam and champ the galling bit?
Shall haughty man my back bestride?
Shall the sharp spur provoke my side?
Forbid it, heav'ns! Reject the rein;
Your shame, your infamy disdain.
Let him the Lion first control,
And still the Tiger's famish'd growl.
Let us, like them, our freedom claim,
And make him tremble at our name.

A general nod approved the cause,
And all the circle neigh'd applause.

When, lo! with grave and solemn pace,
A Steed advanced before the race;

With age and long experience wise,
Around he cast his thoughtful eyes,
And, to the murmurs of the train,
Thus spoke the Nestor of the plain:

When I had health and strength, like you,
The toils of servitude I knew;
Now grateful man rewards my pains,
And gives me all these wide domains.
At will I crop the year's increase;
My latter life is rest and peace.
I grant to man we lend our pains,
And aid him to correct the plains.
But doth not he divide the care,
Through all the labours of the year?
How many thousand structures rise,
To fence us from inclement skies!
For us he bears the sultry day,
And stores up all our winter's hay.
He sows, he reaps the harvest's gain;
We share the toil and share the grain.
Since ev'ry creature was decreed
To aid each other's mutual need,
Appease your discontented mind,
And act the part by heav'n assign'd.

The tumult ceased. The colt submitted,
And, like his ancestors, was bitted.

EARLY SPRING

How sweet this morning air in spring,
When tender is the grass and wet!
{ I see some little leaves have not
Outgrown their curly childhood yet }
And cows no longer hurry home,
However sweet a voice cries "Come."

Here, with green Nature all around,
While that fine bird the skylark sings;
Who now in such a passion is,
He flies by it, and not his wings;
And many a blackbird thrush, and sparrow,
Sing sweeter songs ~~that~~ I may borrow.

These watery swamps and thickets wild—
Called Nature's slums—to me are more
Than any courts where fountains play,
And men-at-arms guard every door;
For I could sit down here alone,
And count the oak-trees one by one

THE LITTLE WAVES OF BREFFNY

THE grand road from the mountain goes shining to
the sea,

And there is traffic in it, and many a horse and
cart;

But the little roads of Cloonagh are dearer far to me,
And the little roads of Cloonagh go rambling
through my heart.

A great storm from the ocean goes shouting o'er the
hill,

And there is glory in it and terror on the wind;
But the haunted air of twilight 'is very strange and
still,

And the little winds of twilight are dearer to my
mind.

The great waves of the Atlantic sweep storming on
their way,

Shining green and silver with the hidden herring
shoal;

But the Little Waves of Breffny have drenched my
heart in spray,

And the Little Waves of Breffny go stumbling
through my soul.

LINES TO THE MEMORY OF DAVID HARE

O'ER the vast waste of waters—from a land
Small but renowned—a proud undaunted band,
Stirred with the thirst of conquest and of gold,
Came—traded—triumphed! History never told
Of monarch-merchants—heroes wandering far—
A stranger tale of traffic or of war.

But can the busy mart, the battle field,
The dearest wealth—the brightest triumph yield?
Ah no! e'en now our generous rulers claim
A prouder guerdon and a purer fame.
Though gold was gained and martial glory won,
They knew their noblest task was not begun.
They held our lands, but could not hold our hearts,
Till, changing force for kindness, arms for arts,
They proffered the rich wisdom of the west,
And poorest minds with priceless treasures blest!

In this divinest duty many a heart,
With holy zeal, hath well sustained its part—
All these our guides—an honour to their land—
To ours a blessing—grateful love command;
But in the glorious list, beyond compare,
In types of light, behold the name of HARE!

Ah, warm philanthropist! ah, faithful friend!
Thy life devoted to one generous end—

To bless the Hindu mind with British lore
And truth's and nature's faded lights restore—
If for a day that lofty aim was crost,
You grieved, like Titus, that a day was lost.
Alas! it is not now a few brief hours
That fate withholds—a heavier grief o'erpowers
A nation whom you loved as if your own—
A life that gave the light of life is gone!
Yet oh! my countrymen, why weep in vain?
If aught may cause an earth-freed spirit pain,
'Tis when it sees in fond hearts left below
An unresigned and unavailing woe.
Be sighs above the grave breathed forth no more;
The gods are deaf when men the past deplore;
But let a friend's true merit best be proved
By imitative zeal in acts he loved.
His memory thus with loftiest lessons rife
May well complete the purpose of his life,
And while our Hindu youth Mind's blessings share
They'll learn to venerate the name of HARE!

73

THE DEATH OF ADMIRAL BLAKE.

(AUGUST 7TH, 1657)

LADEN with spoil of the South, fulfilled with the
glory of achievement,

And freshly crowned with never-dying fame,
Sweeping by shores where the names are the names of
the victories of England,

Across the Bay the squadron homeward came

Proudly they came, but their pride was the pomp of a
funeral at midnight,

When dreader yet the lonely morrow looms;
Few are the words that are spoken, and faces are gaunt
beneath the torchlight

That does but darken more the nodding plumes.

Low on the field of his fame, past hope lay the Admiral
triumphant,

And fain to rest him after all his pain ;
Yet for the love that he bore to his own land, ever
unforgotten,

He prayed to see the western hills again.

Fainter than stars in a sky long gray with the coming of
the daybreak,

Or sounds of night that fade when night is done,
So in the death-dawn faded the splendour and loud
renown of warfare,

And life of all its longings kept but one.

“Oh! to be there for an hour when the shade draws in
 beside the hedgerows,
 And falling apples wake the drowsy noon:
 Oh! for the hour when the elms grow sombre and
 human in the twilight,
 And gardens dream beneath the rising moon.

“ Only to look once more on the land of the memories
 of childhood,
 Forgetting weary winds and barren foam:
 Only to bid farewell to the combe and the orchard
 and the moorland,
 And sleep at last among the fields of home!”

So he was silently praying, till now, when his strength
 was ebbing faster,
 The Lizard lay before them faintly blue;
 Now on the gleaming horizon the white cliffs laughed
 along the coast-line,
 And now the forelands took the shapes they knew.

There lay the Sound and the Island with green leaves
 down beside the water,
 The town, the Hoe, the masts with sunset fired—
 Dreams! ay, dreams of the dead! for the great heart
 faltered on the threshold,
 And darkness took the land his soul desired.

THE CAPTAIN

A LEGEND OF THE NAVY

He that only rules by terror
Doeth grievous wrong.
Deep as Hell I count his error.
Let him hear my song.
Brave the Captain was : the seamen
Made a gallant crew,
Gallant sons of English freemen,
Sailors bold and true.
But they hated his oppression,
Stern he was and rash ;
So for every light transgression
Doom'd them to the lash.
Day by day more harsh and cruel
Seem'd the Captain's mood.
Secret wrath like smother'd fuel
Burnt in each man's blood.
Yet he hoped to purchase glory,
Hoped to make the name
Of his vessel great in story,
Wheresoe'er he came.
So they past by capes and islands,
Many a harbour-mouth,
Sailing under palmy highlands
Far within the South.

On a day when they were going
O'er the lone expanse,
In the north, her canvas flowing,
Rose a ship of France.
Then the Captain's colour heighten'd,
Joyful came his speech:
But a cloudy gladness lighten'd,
In the eyes of each.
'Chase,' he said: the ship flew forward,
And the wind did blow;
Stately, lightly, went she Norward,
Till she near'd the foe.
Then they look'd at him they hated,
Had what they desired:
Mute with folded arms they waited—
Not a gun was fired.
But they heard the foeman's thunder
Roaring out their doom;
All the air was torn in sunder,
Crashing went the boom,
Spars were splinter'd, decks were shatter'd,
Bullets fell like rain;
Over mast and deck were scatter'd
Blood and brains of men.
Spars were splinter'd; decks were broken:
Every mother's son—
Down they dropt—no word was spoken—
Each beside his gun.
On the decks as they were lying,
Were their faces grim.
In their blood, as they lay dying,
Did they smile on him.

Those, in whom he had reliance
For his noble name,
With one smile of still defiance
Sold him unto shame.
Shame and wrath his heart confounded,
Pale he turn'd and red,
Till himself was deadly wounded
Falling on the dead.
Dismal error! fearful slaughter!
Years have wander'd by,
Side by side beneath the water
Crew and Captain lie;
There the sunlit ocean tosses
O'er them mouldering,
And the lonely seabird crosses
With one waft of the wing.

75

MAN'S BLINDNESS TO THE FUTURE

(From the Essay on Man)

HEAVEN from all creatures hides the book of fate,
All but the page prescrib'd, their present state:
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know
Or who could suffer being here below?

The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
 Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
 Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flowery food,
 And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.
 Oh, blindness to the future! kindly given:
 That each may fill the circle mark'd by heaven:
 Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
 A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
 Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
 And now a bubble burst, and now a world.

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
 Wait the great teacher, Death; and God adore.
 What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
 But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
 Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
 Man never is, but always to be blest:
 The soul, uneasy, and confin'd from home,
 Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind
 Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
 His soul proud science, never taught to stray
 Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
 Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
 Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heaven;
 Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
 Some happier island in the watery waste,
 Where slaves once more their native land behold,
 No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.

To be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

76

KNAPWEED

By copse and hedgerow, waste and wall,
He thrusts his cushions red
O'er burdock rank, o'er thistles tall,
He rears his hardy head:
Within, without, the strong leaves press,
He screens the mossy stone,
Lord of a narrow wilderness,
Self-centered and alone.

He numbers no observant friends,
He soothes no childish woes,
Yet nature nurtures him, and tends
As duly as the rose;
He drinks the blessed dew of heaven,
The wind is in his ears,
To guard his growth the planets seven
Swing in their airy spheres.

The spirits of the fields and woods
Throb in his sturdy veins:
He drinks the secret, stealing floods,
And swills the volleying rains:

And when the bird's note showers and breaks
The wood's green heart within,
He stirs his plummy brow and wakes
To draw the sunlight in.

Mute sheep that pull the grasses soft
Crop close and pass him by,
Until he stands alone, aloft,
In surly majesty.
No fly so keen, no bee so bold,
To pierce that knotted zone:
He frowns as though he guarded gold,
And yet he garners none.

And so when autumn winds blow late,
And whirl the chilly wave,
He bows before the common fate,
And drops beside his grave.
None ever owed him thanks or said
"A gift of gracious heaven."
Down in the mire he droops his head;
Forgotten, not forgiven.

Smile on, brave weed! let none inquire
What made or bade thee rise:
Toss thy tough fingers high and higher
To flout the drenching skies.
Let others toil for others' good,
And miss or mar their own,
Thou hast brave health and fortitude
To live and die alone!

77

MY WILL

I WOULD live, if I had my will,
In an old stone grange on a Yorkshire hill;
Ivy-encircled, lichen-streaked,
Low and mullioned, gable-peaked,
With a velvet lawn, and a hedge of yew,
And apple orchard to saunter through,
Hyacinth-scented in spring's clear prime,
And rich with roses in summer-time,
And a waft of heather over the hill,
Had I my will.

Over my tree-tops, grave and brown,
Slants the back of a breezy down;
Through my fields, by the covert edge,
A swift stream splashes from ledge to ledge,
On to the hamlet, scattered, grey,
Where folk live leisurely day by day;
The same old faces about my walks;
Smiling welcomes and simple talks;
Innocent stories of Jack and Jill;
Had I my will.

How my thrushes should pipe ere noon,
Young birds learning the old birds' tune;
Casements wide, when the eve is fair,
To drink the scents of the moonlit air.
Over the valley I'd see the lights
Of the lone hill-farms, on the upland heights;

And hear, when the night is alert with rain,
The steady pulse of the labouring train,
With the measured gush of the merry rill,
Had I my will.

Then in the winter, when gusts pipe thin,
By a clear fire would I sit within,
Warm and dry in the ingle-nook,
Reading at ease in a good grave book;
Under the lamp, as I sideways bend,
I'd scan the face of my well-loved friend;
Writing my verses with careless speed,
One at least would be pleased to read;
Thus sweet leisure my days should fill,
Had I my will.

Then when my last guest steps to my side
—May it be summer, the windows wide—
I would smile as the parson prayed,
Smile to think I was once afraid;
Death should beckon me, take my hand
Smile at the door of the silent land;
Then at the slumber, how good to sleep
Under the grass where the shadows creep,
Where the headstones slant on the wind-swept hill,
I shall have my will.

VIRTUE

SWEET Day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night;
For thou must die

Sweet Rose, whose hue angry and brave ~~red~~
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die

Sweet Spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My Music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die

Only a [!]sweet and virtuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

THE PINE-APPLE AND THE BEE .

THE pine-apples, in triple row,
Were basking hot, and all in blow ;
A bee of most discerning taste
Perceiv'd the fragrance as he pass'd,
On eager wing the spoiler came,
And search'd for crannies in the frame,
Urg'd his attempt on ev'ry side,
To ev'ry pane his trunk applied ;
But still in vain, the frame was tight,
And only pervious to the light ;
Thus having wasted half the day,
He trimm'd his flight another way.

Methinks, I said, in thee I find
The sin and madness of mankind.
To joys forbidden man aspires,
Consumes his soul with vain desires,
Folly the spring of his pursuit,
And disappointment all the fruit.
While Cynthia ogle as she passes
The nymph between two chariot glasses,
She is the pine-apple, and he
The silly unsuccessful bee.
The maid who views with pensive air
The show-glass fraught with glitt'ring ware,
Sees watches, bracelets, rings, and lockets,
But sighs at thought of empty pockets ;
Like thine, her appetite is keen
But ah, the cruel glass between !

Our dear delights are often such,
 Expos'd to view, but not to touch:
 The sight our foolish heart inflames,
 We long for pine-apples in frames:
 With hopeless wish one looks and lingers;
 One breaks the glass, and cuts his fingers;
 But they whom truth and wisdom lead,
 Can gather honey from a weed.

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

ROBERT of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane
 And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
 Apparell'd in magnificent attire,
 With retinue of many a knight and squire,
 On St. John's eve, at vespers, proudly sat
 And heard the priests chant the Magnificat.
 And as he listened, o'er and o'er again
 Repeated, like a burden or refrain,
 He caught the words, "*Deposuit potentes
 De sede, et exaltavit humiles;*"
 And slowly lifting up his kingly head
 He to a learned clerk beside him said,
 "What mean these words?" The clerk m^do
 answer meet.

"He has put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted them of low degree!"
Thereat King Robert muttered scornfully,
"'T is well that such seditious words are sung'
Only by priests and in the Latin tongue;
For unto priests and people be it known,
There is no power can push me from my throne!"
And leaning back, he yawned and fell asleep,
Lulled by the chant monotonous and deep.

When he awoke, it was already night;
The church was empty, and there was no light,
Save where the lamps, that glimmered few and faint,
Lighted a little space before some saint.
He started from his seat and gazed around,
But saw no living thing and heard no sound.
He groped towards the door, but it was locked;
He cried aloud, and listened, and then knocked,
And uttered awful threatenings and complaints,
And imprecations upon men and saints.
The sounds reëchoed from the roof and walls
As if dead priests were laughing in their stalls.

At length the sexton, hearing from without
The tumult of the knocking and the shout,
And thinking thieves were in the house of prayer,
Came with his lantern, asking, "Who is there?"
Half choked with rage, King Robert fiercely said,
"Open: 't is I, the King! Art thou afraid?"
The frightened sexton, muttering with a curse,
"This is some drunken vagabond, or worse!"

Turned the great key and flung the portal wide;
A man rushed by him at a single stride,
Haggard, half naked, without hat or cloak,
Who neither turned, nor looked at him, nor spoke,
But leaped into the blackness of the night,
And vanished like a spectre from his sight.

Robert of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane
And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Despoiled of his magnificent attire,
Bareheaded, breathless, and besprent with mire,
With sense of wrong and outrage desperate,
Strode on and thundered at the palace gate;
Rushed through the courtyard, thrusting in his rage
To right and left each seneschal and page,
And hurried up the broad and sounding stair,
His white face ghastly in the torches' glare.
From hall to hall he passed with breathless speed;
Voices and cries he heard, but did not heed,
Until at last he reached the banquet-room,
Blazing with light, and breathing with perfume

There on the dais sat another king,
Wearing his robes, his crown, his signet-ring,
King Robert's self in features, form, and height,
But all transfigured with angelic light!
It was an Angel; and his presence there
With a divine effulgence filled the air,
And exaltation, piercing the disguise,
Though none the hidden Angel recognize.

A moment speechless, motionless, amazed,
The throneless monarch on the Angel gazed,
Who met his look of anger and surprise
With the divine compassion of his eyes;
Then said, "Who art thou? and why com'st thou
here?"

To which King Robert answered with a sneer,
"I am the King, and come to claim my own
From an impostor, who usurps my throne!"
And suddenly, at these audacious words,
Up sprang the angry guests, and drew their swords;
The Angel answered, with unruffled brow,
"Nay, not the King, but the King's Jester, thou
Henceforth shalt wear the bells and scalloped cape,
And for thy counsellor shalt lead an ape;
Thou shalt obey my servants when they call,
And wait upon my henchmen in the hall!"

Deaf to King Robert's threats and cries and prayers,
They thrust him from the hall and down the stairs;
A group of tittering pages ran before,
And as they opened wide the folding-door,
His heart failed, for he heard, with strange alarms,
The boisterous laughter of the men-at-arms,
And all the vaulted chamber roar and ring
With the mock plaudits of "Long live the King!"

Next morning, waking with the day's first beam,
He said within himself, "It was a dream!"
But the straw rustled as he turned his head,
There were the cap and bells beside his bed,

Around him rose the bare, discoloured walls,
Close by, the steeds were champing in their stalls,
And in the corner, a revolting shape,
Shivering and chattering sat the wretched ape.
It was no dream; the world he loved so much
Had turned to dust and ashes at his touch!

Days came and went; and now returned again
To Sicily the old Saturnian reign;
Under the Angel's governance benign
The happy island danced with corn and wine,
And deep within the mountain's burning breast
Enceladus, the giant, was at rest.

Meanwhile King Robert yielded to his fate,
Sullen and silent and disconsolate.
Dressed in the motley garb that Jesters wear,
With look bewildered and a vacant stare,
Close shaven above the ears, as monks are shorn,
By courtiers mocked, by pages laughed to scorn,
His only friend the ape, his only food
What others left,—he still was unsubdued
And when the Angel met him on his way,
And half in earnest, half in jest, would say,
Sternly, though tenderly, that he might feel
The velvet scabbard held a sword of steel,
“Art thou the King?” the passion of his woe
Burst from him in resistless overflow,
And, lifting high his forehead, he would fling
The haughty answer back, “I am, I am the King

Almost three years were ended; when there came
Ambassadors of great repute and name
From Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Unto King Robert, saying that Pope Urbane
By letter summoned them forthwith to come
On Holy Thursday to his city of Rome.
The Angel with great joy received his guests,
And gave them presents of embroidered vests,
And velvet mantles with rich ermine lined,
And rings and jewels of the rarest kind.
Then he departed with them o'er the sea
Into the lovely land of Italy,
Whose loveliness was more resplendent made
By the mere passing of that cavalcade,
With plumes, and cloaks, and housings, and the stir
Of jewelled bridle and of golden spur.
And lo! among the menials, in mock state,
Upon a piebald steed, with shambling gait,
His cloak of fox-tails flapping in the wind,
The solemn ape demurely perched behind,
King Robert rode, making huge merriment
In all the country towns through which they went.

The Pope received them with great pomp and blare-
Of bannered trumpets, on Saint Peter's square,
Giving his benediction and embrace,
Fervent, and full of apostolic grace,
While with congratulations and with prayers
He entertained the Angel unawares,
Robert, the Jester, bursting through the crowd,
Into their presence rushed, and cried aloud,

" I am the King ! Look, and behold in me
Robert, your brother, King of Sicily !
This man, who wears my semblance to your eyes,
Is an impostor in a king's disguise.
Do you not know me ? does no voice within
Answer my cry, and say we are akin ?"
The Pope in silence, but with troubled mien,
Gazed at the Angel's countenance serene ;
The Emperor, laughing, said, " It is strange sport
To keep a madman for thy Fool at court !"
And the poor, baffled Jester in disgrace
Was hustled back among the populace.

In solemn state the Holy Week went by,
And Easter Sunday gleamed upon the sky ;
The presence of the Angel, with its light,
Before the sun rose, made the city bright,
And with new fervour filled the hearts of men,
Who felt that Christ indeed had risen again.
Even the Jester, on his bed of straw,
With haggard eyes the unwonted splendour saw.
He felt within a power unfelt before,
And, kneeling humbly on his chamber floor,
He heard the rushing garments of the Lord
Sweep through the silent air, ascending heavenward.

And now the visit ending, and once more
Valmond returning to the Danube's shore,
Homeward the Angel journeyed, and again
The land was made resplendent with his train,
Flashing along the towns of Italy
Unto Salerno, and from thence by sea.

And when once more within Palermo's wall,
And, seated on the throne in his great hall,
He heard the Angelus from convent towers,
As if the better world conversed with ours,
He beckoned to King Robert to draw nigher,
And with a gesture bade the rest retire;
And when they were alone, the Angel said,
" Art thou the King?" Then, bowing down his head,
King Robert crossed both hands upon his breast,
And meekly answered him: " Thou knowest best!
My sins as scarlet are; let me go hence,
And in some cloister's school of penitence,
Across those stones, that pave the way to heaven,
Walk barefoot, till my guilty soul be shriven! "

The Angel smiled, and from his radiant face
A holy light illumined all the place,
And through the open window, loud and clear,
They heard the monks chant in the chapel near,
Above the stir and tumult of the street,
" He has put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted them of low degree! "
And through the chant a second melody
Rose like the throbbing of a single string:
" I am an Angel, and thou art the King ! "
King Robert, who was standing near the throne,
Lifted his eyes, and lo! he was alone!
But all apparelled as in days of old,
With ermined mantle and with cloth of gold;
And when his courtiers came, they found him there
) Kneeling upon the floor, absorbed in silent prayer.

LAUS INFANTIIUM *

IN praise of little children I will say
God first made man, then found a better way
For woman, but His third way was the best.
Of all created things, the loveliest
And most divine are children. Nothing here
Can be to us more gracious or more dear.
And though, when God saw all His works were good,
There was no rosy flower of babyhood,
'Twas said of children in a later day
That none could enter Heaven save such as they.

The earth, which feels the flowering of a thorn,
Was glad, O little child, when you were born;
The earth, which thrills when skylarks scale the blue
Soared up itself to God's own Heaven in you;
And Heaven, which loves to lean down and to glass
Its beauty in each dewdrop on the grass,—
Heaven laughed to find your face so pure and fair,
And left, O little child, its reflex there.

* By kind permission of the author and the publishers,
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A NEW POET

I WRITE. He sits beside my chair,
And scribbles, too, in hushed delight,
He dips his pen in charmed air:
What is it he pretends to write?

He toils and toils; the paper gives
No clue to aught he thinks. What then?
His little heart is glad; he lives
The poems that he cannot pen.

Strange fancies throng that baby brain.
What grave, sweet looks! what earnest eyes!
He stops—reflects—and now again
His unrecording pen he plies.

It seems a satire on myself,—
These dreamy nothings scrawled in air,
This thought, this work! oh tricky elf,
Wouldst drive thy father to despair?

Despair! Ah, no: the heart, the mind
Persists in hoping,—schemes and strives
That there may linger with our kind
Some memory of our little lives.

Beneath his rock in the early world
Smiling the naked hunter lay
And sketched on horn the spear he hurled,
The urus which he made his prey.

Like him I strive in hope my rhymes
May keep my name a little while,—
O child, who knows how many times
We two have made the angels smile!

83

NIGHT

NIGHT is the time for rest:
How sweet, when labours close,
To gather round an aching breast
The curtain of repose,
Stretch the tired limbs, and lay the head
Down on our own delightful bed!

Night is the time for dreams:
The gay romance of life,
When truth that is, and truth that seems,
Mix in fantastic strife:
Ah! visions, less beguiling far,
Than waking dreams by daylight are!

Night is the time for toil:
To plough the classic field,
Intent to find the buried spoil
Its wealthy furrows yield;
Till all is ours that sages taught,
That poets sang, and heroes wrought.

Night is the time to weep:
To wet with unseen tears
Those graves of memory, where sleep
The joys of other years;
Hopes, that were angels at their birth,
But died when young, like things of earth

Night is the time to watch:
O'er ocean's dark expanse,
To hail the Pleiades, or catch
The full moon's earliest glance,
That brings into the home-sick mind
All we have loved and left behind.

Night is the time for care:
Brooding on hours misspent,
To see the spectre of despair
Come to our lonely tent;
Like Brutus, 'midst his slumbering host,
Summon'd to die by Cæsar's ghost.

Night is the time to think:
When, from the eye, the soul
Takes flight; and on the utmost brink
Of yonder starry pole,
Discerns beyond the abyss of night
The dawn of uncreated light.

Night is the time for death:
When all around is peace,

Calmly to yield the weary breath,
From sin and suffering cease,
Think of heaven's bliss, and give the sign
To parting friends;—such death be mine.

84

AT NIGHT *

HOME, home from the horizon far and clear,
Hither the soft wings sweep;
Flocks of the memories of the day draw near
The dovecote doors of sleep.
Oh which are they that come through sweetest light
Of all these homing birds?
Which with the straightest and the swiftest flight?
Your words to me, your words!

85

NAPOLEON AND THE BRITISH SAILOR

I LOVE contemplating, apart
From all his homicidal glory,
The traits that soften to our heart
Napoleon's story.

* By kind permission of the authoress and the publishers,
Messrs. Burns and Oates, Ltd., London.

Tw'as when his banners at⁸ Boulogne
Arm'd in our island every freeman
His navy chanced to capture one
Poor British seaman.

They suffer'd him, I know not how,
Unprisoned on the shore to roam;
And aye was bent his longing brow
On England's home

His eye, methinks, pursued the flight
Of birds to Britain half-way over
With envy; they could reach the white
Dear cliffs of Dover.)

A stormy midnight watch, he thought,
Than this sojourn would have been dearer,
If but the storm his vessel brought
To England nearer.

At last, when care had banished sleep,
He saw one morning, dreaming, doting,
An empty hogshead from the deep
Come shoreward floating.

He hid it in a cave, and wrought
The live-long day laborious, lurking,
Until he launched a tiny boat
By mighty working.

Heaven help us! 'twas a thing beyond
Description wretched: ^{such} a wherry
Perhaps ne'er ventured on a pond,
Or crossed a ferry.

For ploughing in the salt-sea field
It would have made the boldest shudder
Untarr'd, uncompass'd, and unkeel'd,
No sail, no rudder

From neighbouring woods he interlaced
His sorry skiff with wattled willows;
And thus equipp'd he would have passed
The foaming billows.

But Frenchmen caught him on the beach.—
His little Argo sorely jeering,
Till tidings of him chanced to reach
Napoleon's hearing.

With folded arms Napoleon stood,
Serene alike in peace and danger;
And, in his wonted attitude,
Address'd the stranger:

Rash man, that wouldst yon Channel pass
On twigs and staves so rudely fashioned!
Thy heart with some sweet British lass
Must be impassioned.'

I have no sweetheart,' said the lad;
 But, absent long from one another,
 Great was the longing that I had
 'To see my mother.'

And so thou shalt,' Napoleon said,
 Ye've both my favour fairly won;
 A noble mother must have bred
 So brave a son.'

He gave the tar a piece of gold,
 And, with a flag of truce, commanded
 He should be shipp'd to England Old,
 And safely landed.

Our sailor oft could scantily shift
 To find a dinner, plain and hearty;
 But never changed the coin and gift
 Of Bonaparté.

—

86

MATERNITY

ONE wept whose only child was dead,
New-born, ten years ago.
'Weep not; he is in bliss,' they said.
She answered, 'Even so.'

'Ten years ago was born in pain
A child, not now forlorn.
But oh, ten years ago, in vain,
A mother, a mother was born.'

87

ARMADA *

AND there was mustering all night long, wild rumour
and unrest,
And mothers clasped their children the closer to their
breast;

But calmly yet in Plymouth Sound the fleet of
England lay,
The gunners slept beside their guns and waited for
the day.

* By kind permission of the author.

Then as the mists of morning cleared, up drew the
Spanish van,
And grimly off the Devon cliffs that ten days' fight
began.

Four giant galleons led the way like vulture to the
feast,
And the huge league-long crescent rolled on from west
to east:

But they will not stay for Plymouth, nor check the
late advance,
For Parma's armies wait and fret to cross the Strait
from France.

No grander fleet, no better foe, has ever crossed the
main,
No braver captains walked the deck than hold the
day for Spain.

There sailed Miguel d'Oquenda, our seamen knew
him well,
Recalde and Pietro Valdez, Mexia and Pimentel.

Oh, if ever, men of England, now brace your courage
high,
Make good your boast to rule the waves, and keep the
linstocks dry:

For the weeks of weary waiting, the long alert is
past,
The pent-up hate of nations meets face to face at
last.

The giant ships held' on their course, and as the last
was clear

The Plymouth fleet put out to sea and hung upon
their rear;

And their war-drums beat to quarters the bugles
blared alarms,

The stately ocean-castles were filled with men-at-arms.

All through that summer morn and noon, on till the
close of night,

We hurried through the galleons and fought a
running fight;

And far up Dartmoor highlands men heard the
booming gun,

And watched the cloud of battle beneath the summer
sun.

As o'er some dead sea-monster wheel round the
white-winged gulls,

Our little ships ran in and out between the giant
hulls;

For fleetly through their clumsy lines we steered our
nimble craft,

And thundered in our broadsides, and raked them
fore and aft;

The broken spars flung havoc down, the floating
castles reeled,

While o'er our heads their cannons flashed, their
idle volleys pealed

And the sun went down behind us, but the sea was
ribbed with red,
For the greatest of the galleons was burning as she
fled.

Yet hard behind we followed and held on through
the night,
And kept the tossing lanterns of the Spanish fleet
in sight.

So past Torbay to Portland Bill they ran on even
keels,
And ever we hung behind them and gored their
flying heels;

And many a hull dismasted was left alone to lag,
To fall back in the hornets' nest, and, fighting, strike
her flag

Then every port along the coast put out its privateers,
And one by one our ships came in with ringing
cheers on cheers;

So sailed Sir Walter Raleigh, the knight-errant of
~~the sea;~~
And all the best of Cornwall and Devon's chivalry,
—
Northumberland and Cumberland, and Oxford and
Carew,
Till from every mast in England the red-cross banner
blew.

A calm fell on the twenty-fifth—it was St. Jago'
day—

And face to face off Weymouth cliffs the baffled
warships lay.

Now, bishops, read your Masses, and friars, chant
your psalm!

Now, Spain, go up and prosper, for your saint hath
sent the calm!

With stubborn sweep of giant oars that thresh the
glassy blue,

The rear-guard galleons laboured down towards our
foremost few.

Then loud-laughed Admiral Howard, and a cheer
went up the skies,

King Philip's three great galleons will be a noble
prize!

So we towed out two of our six ships to meet each
floating fort

And we laid one on the starboard side and we laid
one on the port;

And all forenoon we pounded them; they fought us
hard and well,

Till the sulphur clouds along the calm hung like the
breath of hell

But a fair wind rose at noontide and balked us of our
prey;
The rescue came on wings of need and snatched the
prize away.

So past the Needles, past Spithead, along the Sussex
shores,
The tide of battle eastward rolls, the cannon thunder
roars;

The pike-men on the Sussex Downs could see the
running fight,
And spread the rumour inland, the Downs were full in
flight:

The fishing smacks put out to sea from many a
white-chalk cove,
To follow in the battle's wake and glean the
treasure-trove;

Till night fell on the battle-scene, and under moon
and star
Men saw the English Channel one long red flame of
war.

So hurried like their hunted bulls before the horse-
men's goad.
They dropped on the eve of Sunday to their place in
Calais road:

{And we, we ringed about them and dogged them to
their lair

Beneath the guns of Calais, to fight us if they dare;

But after they rode at anchor and rued their battered
pride,

As a wounded hound draws off alone to lick his gory
side;

And when the Sabbath morning broke, they had not
changed their line,

For Parma's host by Dunkirk town lay still and made
no sign.

So calm that Sabbath morning fell, men heard the
land-bells ring,

They heard the monks at masses, they heard the
soldiers sing;

Then as the moon grew sultry came sounds of feast
and mirth,

And when the sun set many had seen the last on
earth.

A breeze sprang up at even, dark clouds rolled up the
sky,

And evil-boding fell the night, that last night of
July.

But in the fleet of England was every soul awake,
For a pinnace ran from bark to bark and brought us
word from Drake;

And we towed eight ships to leeward, and set their
bows to shore,
To send the Dons a greeting they never had before;

No traitor moon revealed us, there shone no summer
star
As we smeared the doomed hulls over with rosin and
with tar;

And all their heavy ordnance was rammed with stone
and chain,
And they bore down on the night wind into the heart
of Spain.

It was Prowse and Young of Bideford who had the
charge to steer,
And a bow-shot from the Spanish lines they fired
them with a cheer,

Dropped each into his pinnace—it was deftly done
and well—
And on the tide set shoreward they loosed the floating
hell!
Oh, then were cables severed, then rose a panic cry
To every saint in heaven, that shook the reddened
sky

And some to north and some to south, like a herd of
bulls set free,
With sails half set and cracking spars they staggered
out to sea:

But we lay still in order and ringed them as they
came,
And scared the cloudy dawning with thunder and
with flame,

The North Sea fleet came sailing down, our ships
grew more and more,
As Wynter charged their severed van and drove their
best on shore.

The Flemish boors came out to loot, and up the
Holland dykes
The windmills stopped, the burghers marched with
muskets and with pikes;

So we chased them through the racing sea and
banged them as they went,
And some we sank, and boarded some, till all our
shot was spent;

Till we had no food nor powder, but only the will to
fight,
And the shadows closed about us and we lost them
in the night.

The white sea-horses sniffed the gale and climbed our
sides for glee,
And rocked us and caressed us and danced away to
lee,

Now rest you, men of England, for the fight is lost
and won:

The God of Storms will do the rest, and grimly it
was done—

Far north, far north on wings of death those scattered
galleys steer
Toward the rock-bound islands, the Scottish head-
lands drear;

And the fishers of the Orkneys shall reap a golden
store,
And Irish kernes shall strip the dead tossed up their
rocky shore

Long, long the maids of Aragon may watch and wait
in vain;
The boys they sent for dowries will never come
again.

Deep, fathoms deep their lovers sleep beneath an alien
wave,
And not a foot of English land, not even for a grave!
But it's Ah for the childless mothers! and Ah for
the widowed maids!
And the sea-weed, not the myrtle, twined round their
rusting blades!

But we sailed back in triumph, our banner floating
free,
Our red-cross banner in the gale,—the masters of the
sea!

The waves did battle for us, the winds were on our
side,

The God of the just and unjust hath humbled Philip's
pride.

Henceforth shall no man bind us: where'er the salt
tides flow

Our sails shall take the sea-breeze, the oaks of
England go

And every isle shall know them, and every land that
lies

(Beyond the bars of sunset, the shadows of sunrise.

Henceforth, O Island England, be worthy of thy
fate,

And let thy new-world children revere thee wise and
great

Sit throned on either ocean and watch thy sons
increase,

And keep the seas for freedom and hold the lands for
peace!

Thy fleets shall bear the harvest from all thy daughter
lands.

And o'er thy blue sea-highways the continents join
hands.)

But should some new intruder rise to bind the ocean's
bride,

Should once thy wave-dominion be questioned
denied,

Then rouse thee from thy happy dream, go forth and
 be again
The England of our hero-sires who broke the might
 of Spain.

85

ON THE OTHER SIDE

WHAT will you do through the waiting days,
 What will my darling do?
Will you sleep, or wander in those strange ways
 Until I can come to you?

Do you cry at the door as I cry here,
 Death's door that lies between?
Do you plead in vain for my love, my dear,
 As you stand by my side unseen?

Who will comfort your difficult ways
 That were hard to understand,
When I who knew you through all your days,
 Can give you no helping hand?

When I who loved you no word can speak,
 Though your ghost should cry to me,
Can give no help, though my heart should break
 At the thought of your agor^a

You were shy of strangers—and who will come
As you stand there lone and new,
Through the long years when my lips are dumb
What will my darling do?

89

LITTLE JESUS *

LITTLE Jesus, wast Thou shy
Once, and just so small as I?
And what did it feel like to be
Out of Heaven, and just like me?
Didst Thou sometimes think of *there*,
And ask where all the angels were?
I should think that I would cry
For my house all made of sky;
I would look about the air,
And wonder where my angels were,
And at waking 'twould distress me—
Not an angel there to dress me!
Hadst Thou ever any toys,
Like us little girls and boys?
And didst Thou play in Heaven with all
The angels that were not too tall,

* By kind permission of the literary executor Mr. Wilfrid Meynell.

'With stars for marbles? Did the things
Play *Can you see me?* through their wings?
And did Thy Mother let Thee spoil
Thy robes, with playing on *our* soil?
How nice to have them always new
In Heaven, because 'twas quite clean blue!
Didst Thou kneel at night to pray,
And didst Thou join Thy hands, this way?

And did they tire sometimes, being young,
And make the prayer seem very long?
And dost Thou like it best, that we
Should join our hands to pray to Thee?
I used to think, before I knew,
The prayer not said unless we do.
And did Thy mother at the night
Kiss Thee, and fold the clothes in right?
And didst Thou feel quite good in bed,
Kissed, and sweet, and Thy prayers said?

Thou canst not have forgotten all
That it feels like to be small:
And Thou know'st I cannot pray
To Thee in my father's way—
When Thou wast so little, say,
Couldst Thou talk Thy Father's way?—
So, a little Child, come down
And hear a child's tongue like Thy own;
Take me by the hand and walk,
And listen to my baby-talk.
To Thy Father show my prayer
(He will look, Thou art so fair,)

And say: "O Father, I, Thy Son,
Bring the prayer of a little one."

And He will smile, that children's tongue
Has not changed since Thou wast young!

90

THE FATHERLAND

WHERE is the true man's fatherland?
Is it where he by chance is born?
Doth not the yearning spirit scorn
In such scant borders to be spanned?
O, yes! his fatherland must be
As the blue heaven wide and free!

Is it alone where freedom is,
Where God is God and man is man?
Doth he not claim a broader span
For the soul's love of home than this?
O yes! his fatherland must be
As the blue heaven wide and free!

Where'er a human heart doth wear
Joy's myrtle-wreath or sorrow's gyves,
Where'er a human spirit strives
After a life more true and fair,
There is the true man's birthplace grand,
His is a world-wide fatherland!

Where'er a single slave doth pine,
Where'er one man may help another,—
Thank God for such a birthright, brother,—
That spot of earth is thine and mine!
There is the true man's birthplace grand,
His is a world-wide fatherland!

91

THE HERITAGE

The rich man's son inherits lands,
And piles of brick, and stone, and gold,
And he inherits soft white hands,
And tender flesh that fears the cold,
Nor dares to wear a garment old;
A heritage, it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

The rich man's son inherits cares;
The bank may break, the factory burn,
A breath may burst his bubble shares,
And soft white hands could hardly earn
A living that would serve his turn;
A heritage, it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

The rich man's son inherits wants,
His stomach craves for dainty fare;
With sated heart, he hears the pants
Of toiling hands with brown arms bare,
And wearies in his easy chair;
A heritage, it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit?
Stout muscles and a sinewy heart,
A hardy frame, a hardier spirit;
King of two hands, he does his part
In every useful toil and art;
A heritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit?
Wishes o'erjoyed with humble things,
A rank adjudged by toil-won merit,
Content that from employment springs,
A heart that in his labour sings;
A heritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit?
A patience learned of being poor,
Courage, if sorrow come, to bear it,
A fellow-feeling that is sure
To make the outcast bless his door;
A heritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee. /

O rich man's son! there is a toil,
That with all others level stands;—
Large charity doth never soil;
But only whiten, soft white hands;
This is the best crop from thy lands;
A heritage, it seems to me,
Worth being rich to hold in fee.

O poor man's son! scorn not thy state;
There is worse weariness than thine,
In merely being rich and great;
Toil only gives the soul to shine,
And makes rest fragrant and benign;
A heritage, it seems to me,
Worth being poor to hold in fee.

Both, heirs to some six feet of sod,
Are equal in the earth at last;
Both, children of the same dear God,
Prove title to your heirship vast
By record of a well-filled past;
A heritage, it seems to me,
Well worth a life to hold in fee.

ABIDE WITH ME!

ABIDE with me! fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens: Lord, with me abide!
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see:
Not a brief glance I beg, a passing word,
O Thou that changest not, abide with me!
Come, not to sojourn, but abide with me!
Familiar, condescending, patient, free,
But, as Thou dwell'st with Thy disciples, Lord.

I need Thy presence every passing hour:
What but Thy grace can foil the Tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me!

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness:
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, Thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies!
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows {
flee:

In life and death, O Lord, abide with me!

THE MOUNTAIN AND THE SQUIRREL

'THE mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter ' little prig; '
'Bun replied,
' You are doubtless very big,
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together
To make up a year,
And a sphere.
And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place.
If I'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half so spry :
I'll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track.
'Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut.'

THE LOSS OF THE BIRKENHEAD *

(Supposed to be told by a soldier who survived.)

*RIGHT on our flank the crimson sun went down,
The deep sea rolled around in dark repose;
When, like the wild shriek from some captured town,
A cry of women rose.

The stout ship *Birkenhead* lay hard and fast,
Caught without hope upon a hidden rock;
Her timbers thrilled as nerves, when through them
passed
The spirit of that shock.

And ever like base cowards, who leave their ranks
In danger's hour, before the rush of steel,
Drifted away disorderly the planks
From underneath her keel.

So calm the air, so calm and still the flood,
That low down in its blue translucent glass
We saw the great fierce fish, that thirst for blood,
Pass slowly, then repass.

* By kind permission of Sir Everard H. Doyle, Bart., and
Messrs Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London.

They tarried, the waves tarried, for their prey!
 The sea turned one clear smile! Like things asleep
 Those dark shapes in the azure silence lay,
 As quiet as the deep.

Then amidst oath, and prayer, and rush, and wreck,
 Faint screams, faint questions waiting no reply,
 Our Colonel gave the word, and on the deck
 Formed us in line to die.

To die!—'twas hard, whilst the sleek ocean glowed
 Beneath a sky as fair as summer flowers:—
 “ *All to the boats!* ” one cried:—he was, thank God,
 No officer of ours!

Our English hearts beat true:—we would not stir:
 That base appeal we heard, but heeded not:
 On land, on sea, we had our Colours, sir,
 To keep without a spot!

They shall not say in England, that we fought
 With shameful strength, unhonoured life to seek;
 Into mean safety, mean deserters, brought
 By trampling down the weak.

So we made women with their children go,
 The oars ply back again, and yet again;
 Whilst, inch by inch, the drowning ship sank low,
 Still under steadfast men.

—What follows, why recall?—The brave who died,
Died without flinching in the bloody surf,
They sleep as well beneath that purple tide,
As others under turf:—

They sleep as well! and, roused from their wild grave
Wearing their wounds like stars, shall rise again,
Joint-heirs with Christ, because they bled to save
His weak ones, not in vain.

95

THE RED THREAD OF HONOUR

ELEVEN men of England
A breast-work charged in vain;
Eleven men of England
Lie stripped and gashed, and slain.
Slain; but of foes that guarded
Their rock-built fortress well,
Some twenty had been mastered,
When the last soldier fell.

Whilst Napier piloted his wondrous way
Across the sand waves of the desert sea,
Then flashed at once, on each fierce clan, dismay,
Lord of their wild Truckee.

These missed the glen to which their steps were bent
 Mistook a mandate, from afar half heard
 And, in that glorious error, calmly went
 To death without a word.

The robber-chief mused deeply,
 Above those daring dead;
 "Bring here," at length he shouted,
 "Bring quick, the battle thread.
 Let Eblis blast for ever
 Their souls if Allah will:
 But we must keep unbroken
 The old rules of the Hill.

"Before the Ghiznee tiger
 Leapt forth to burn and slay;
 Before the holy Prophet
 Taught our grim tribes to pray
 Before Secunder's lances
 Pierced through each Indian glen;
 The mountain laws of honour
 Were framed for fearless men.

"Still, when a chief dies bravely,
 We bind with green one wrist—
 Green for the brave, for heroes
 One crimson thread we twist.
 Say ye, oh gallant Hillmen,
 For these, whose life had fled,
 Which is the fitting colour,
 The green one, or the red?"

" Our brethren, laid in honoured graves, may wear,
Their green reward," each noble savage said ;
" To these, whom hawks and hungry wolves shall tear
Who dares deny the red ?"

Thus conquering hate, and steadfast to the right,
Fresh from the heart that haughty verdict came ;
Beneath a waning moon, each spectral height
Rolled back its loud acclaim.

Once more the chief gazed keenly
Down on those daring dead :
From his good sword their heart's blood
Crept to that crimson thread.
Once more he cried, " The judgment,
Good friends, is wise and true,
But though the red be given,
Have we not more to do ?

" These were not stirred by anger
Nor yet by lust made bold ;
Renown they thought above them,
Nor did they look for gold.
To them their leader's signal
Was the voice of God :
Removed, and uncomplaining
The path it showed they trod.

" As, without sound or struggle,
The stars unhurrying march
Where Allah's finger guides them
Through yonder purple arch,

These Franks, sublimely silent,
 Without a quickened breath,
 Went, in the strength of duty,
 Straight to their goal of death.

" If I were now to ask you,
 To name our bravest man
 Ye all at once would answer,
 They call'd him, Mehrab Khan,
 He sleeps among his fathers
 Dear to our native land,
 With the bright mark he bled for
 Firm round his faithful hand.

" He says they sing of Roostum
 Fill all the past with light;
 If truth be in their music
 He was a noble knight
 But were those heroes living
 And strong for battle still
 Would Mehrab Khan or Roostum
 Have climbed like these, the Hill?"

And they replied, " Though Mehrab Khan was brave,
 As chief, he chose himself what risks to run
 Prince Roostum lied, his forfeit life to save,
 Which these had never done."
 " Enough," he shouted fiercely;
 " Doomed though they be to hell,
 Bind fast the crimson trophy
 Round both wrists—bind it well!

Who knows but that great Allah
May grudge such matchless men,
With none so decked in heaven.
To the fiends' flaming den?"

96

THE FIREMAN *

(An impression of the street.)

His foe is fire, fire, fire!
Hark his hoarse dispersing cry,
From his path asunder fly!
Speed! or men and women die,
For his foe is fire, fire!

His foe is fire, fire, fire!
He is armed and helmed in brass;
Let his thundering chargers pass;
Be the iron Strand as grass,
For their foe is fire, fire!

His foe is fire, fire, fire!
On he rushes as in gold,
Under him a chariot rolled,
As in Roman triumph old,
But his foe is fire, fire!

* By kind permission of Mr. John Lane, London.

His foe is fire, fire, fire !
Red the vault above him reels,
Now the blistering stairway peels
But the battle-bliss he feels,
For his foe is fire, fire !

His foe is fire, fire, fire !
Up the ladder flies he light,
Disappears in dreadful night,
Now re-starts upon the sight,
Sudden out of fire, fire !

His foe is fire, fire, fire !
And no word the hero saith,
Only on his arm hath breath
Something between life and death,
Snatched from fire, fire !

His foe is fire, fire, fire !
Bring him to the victor's car,
Richer is his spoil of war,
Than from Roman battle far,
Who has triumphed over fire.

THE CAROL OF THE POOR CHILDREN *

We are the poor children, come out to see the sights
On this day of all days, on this night of nights;
The stars in merry parties are dancing in the sky,
A fine star, a new star, is shining on high!

(We are the poor children, our lips are frosty blue,
We cannot sing our carol as well as rich folk do;
Our bellies are so empty we have no singing voice,
But this night of all nights good children must
rejoice)

We do rejoice, we do rejoice, as hard as we can try,
A fine star, a new star is shining in the sky!
And while we sing our carol, we think of the delight
The happy kings and shepherds make in Bethlehem
to-night.

Are we naked, mother, and are we starving-poor—
Oh, see what gifts the kings have brought outside the
stable-door;
Are we cold, mother, the ass will give his hay
To make the manger warm and keep the cruel winds
away.

* By kind permission of Messrs. T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd.,
London.

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We are the poor children, but not so poor who sing
Our carol without voiceless hearts to greet the
new-born King.

On this night of all nights, when in the frosty sky
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